

Implementing Services in Rural Scotland A Progress Report



SCOTTISH NATIONAL RURAL PARTNERSHIP

**IMPLEMENTING *SERVICES IN RURAL SCOTLAND*: A
PROGRESS REPORT**

**A Report to Ministers by the Scottish National Rural
Partnership's Sub-Group on Monitoring the
Implementation of the *Services in Rural Scotland* Report**

November 2002

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	5
Section A: Overarching Issues	7
Section B: Key Services	20
Conclusion	29
Annex A	33
Annex B	34
Annex C	35

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scottish National Rural Partnership's (SNRP) Report *Services in Rural Scotland*, (published January 2001) was commissioned by Ministers in order to identify innovative approaches to providing services in rural areas and offer recommendations on how local communities and service providers might work together to improve access to services in rural areas. The report was welcomed by Ministers, who were keen that its messages and recommendations were taken forward. They therefore asked SNRP to monitor and report back on progress being made in implementing the report. SNRP took forward this task by forming a small sub-group, which met for the first time in November 2001, and completed its work in September 2002.

The Sub-Group gathered evidence from service providers, to see how the report had impacted on the way in which they were approaching service delivery in rural and remote areas. This included both meetings with representatives from key service providers, and written evidence from a range of other service providers. While the *Services in Rural Scotland* report had focussed on the provision of non-statutory services, many of its findings and recommendations could be applied equally to statutory services. The Sub-Group therefore gathered evidence from some statutory service providers. Similarly, while the report had focussed on the impact of service provision on individuals, many of its messages are equally applicable to businesses, and thus business representatives were also included in the evidence-gathering process. The Sub-Group found the evidence-gathering process to be extremely useful, and hoped that, in itself, it may have helped to raise the profile of the report within the organisations concerned.

In taking forward its work, the Sub-Group identified a number of key issues, which may warrant further exploration or consideration. These can be summarised as follows:

- Many of the findings and recommendations of the original report were aspirational in nature, making it more difficult to monitor progress, than would have been the case if these had been more robust and targeted. It also resulted in some service providers appearing to have paid little more than lip service to the report.
- It is difficult to assess the extent to which the Services Report is directly contributing to better provision of services in remote and rural areas. However, we welcome the general higher priority being attached to service delivery. It is notable that a considerable number of service delivery projects/ initiatives are being taken forward beyond the scope of the Report's specific recommendations.
- There continues to be a need for a more robust approach to assessing and measuring rural service needs and how delivery is meeting these needs. An enhanced evidential base & research, as well as mechanisms for assessing satisfaction among rural dwellers with the level and quality of provision of services, is essential.

- Community Planning has huge potential to transform how services are planned and provided, but service providers will need to consult with local communities through existing mechanisms in the meantime (SIPs, LRPs, CVSs). Community Budgeting, bringing all partners' budgets to the table, is another potentially crucial development.
- Changes in the organisational structures of bodies involved in local partnership working (e.g. Communities Scotland) need to be sensitive to the impact these changes will have on service delivery in rural areas.
- The need for longer term support and funding for community capacity building and for the voluntary sector. Variations in existing support in different geographical areas (in particular between the HIE and non-HIE rural areas) should be addressed.
- There may be value in having local Compacts to improve core support for voluntary organisations, delivering important services in rural areas.
- There is a need for a greater interface with Banks and other larger businesses in rural communities, to encourage participation in local partnerships.
- Attention also needs to be paid to the involvement of the local business community, and to ensuring that it has the ability to play its role in influencing and addressing local service requirements.
- The inherent problem of sustainability of many rural services. Communities need to be facilitated to assess their service needs. Consideration should be given to supporting pilot community appraisal studies.
- Partnership working is relatively common among public and voluntary sector organisations, particularly between those organisations with co-terminous boundaries. However, there appear to be greater potential barriers to partnership working between the public/voluntary sector and the private sector. We also found very few examples of private sector sponsorship of local events or projects.
- We found plentiful examples of innovative working, but relatively poor dissemination of best practice, particularly between organisations and geographic areas.
- We found widespread support for community buildings, and the role they can play in enhancing service provision. However, issues remain regarding how these are funded and their long-term sustainability.
- We were concerned at the lack of progress in addressing the provision and sustainability of childcare in rural areas.

- Given that Community Planning is still at an early stage, and that other developments to improve service provision have still to bear fruit, we believe there is a need for a further monitoring exercise to be carried out in, say 2 years' time.

INTRODUCTION

Background

1. The Scottish National Rural Partnership's (SNRP) Report *Services in Rural Scotland* (published January 2001) was commissioned by Ministers in order to identify innovative approaches to providing services in rural areas and offer recommendations on how local communities and service providers might work together to improve access to services in rural areas.
2. As part of the Executive's ongoing commitment to improving service delivery, and access to services for those living in rural communities, the Minister for Environment and Rural Development tasked SNRP to monitor and report back on progress being made by service providers in taking forward and implementing the main findings and recommendations of the *Services in Rural Scotland* Report.
3. SNRP took forward this task by forming a sub-group encompassing representatives of the voluntary sector (the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations), the private sector (the Federation of Small Businesses) and the public sector (CoSLA and the Enterprise Networks). (Details of membership at [Annex A.](#)) We held our first meeting in November 2001, and met for a final time in September 2002. This paper reports on the outcomes of our work.

Process

4. We approached our task by agreeing that we needed to gather evidence from all types of service providers identified in the original report, to see how the report had impacted on the way in which they were approaching service delivery in remote and rural areas. We therefore set up a series of meetings with representatives of organisations from key sectors responsible for taking forward one or more of the report's recommendations. In addition, we sought written responses from a number of other organisations involved in service provision in rural areas. Details of the evidence we collected is provided at [Annex B.](#) To aid our work, we also drew up a table listing the service providers with an interest in each of the recommendations in the original report. This table is reproduced at [Annex C.](#)
5. The original report focussed on the provision of a number of key non-statutory services, and its findings and recommendations were targeted towards such services. However, it is clear that many of these findings and recommendations could be applied equally to the provision of some statutory services, such as the utilities, local government services, and healthcare. Therefore, in taking forward our work, we spoke to and gathered evidence from some statutory service providers. In a similar vein, while the original report focussed on the impact of service provision on individuals, rather than businesses, many of its messages were equally applicable to the provision of services for businesses. We therefore took evidence from business representatives, and will comment on the extent to which the report's messages have influenced the provision of services to businesses. Although the original report included some quite specific recommendations, many were aspirational in nature, reflecting the remit which had been set. This made our task of monitoring progress

slightly more difficult, given that, in some cases, responsibility for taking forward some of the findings was not clearly assigned.

6. This report draws on the discussions we held with service providers, the written responses, and the Executive's formal response to *Services in Rural Scotland* which was published September 2001¹. We are extremely grateful to all individuals and organisations who spared valuable time to come and speak to us or to prepare a written submission. We found this to be an extremely useful process, and, in itself, we hope it may have contributed to raising the profile of the report within the organisations concerned. We have drawn heavily on the evidence we have gathered in preparing this report and in arriving at our main findings.

Structure

7. In taking forward its monitoring of the services report, we were keen to avoid a tick-box approach whereby progress with each of the individual recommendations was assessed in isolation of any other progress, or lack of it, in relation to services in remote and rural areas generally.

8. As a result, **Section A** of this monitoring report focuses on progress in implementing the overarching findings of *Services in Rural Scotland*, namely:

- The rural context
- Community participation and consultation on service needs
- Community Capacity Building
- Partnership working in the delivery of rural services
- Innovative approaches and the sharing of best practice

9. **Section B** moves on to focus on progress in implementing recommendations in the key service areas of:

- transport and access to services;
- retail and business services;
- information and advice;
- multi-purpose buildings; and
- childcare.

It both considers progress with key recommendations contained in the services report and outlines additional initiatives which are contributing to the delivery of services in remote and rural areas.

10. Finally, the report concludes by identifying particular issues which the evidence suggests may be acting as barriers, or at the very least inhibiting, implementation of some of the recommendations in the original report.

¹ *Scottish National Rural Partnership Report on Service Delivery: Executive Response to Recommendations* (September 2001), pp. 3-4. Available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/

SECTION A: OVERARCHING ISSUES

The Rural Context

1. The *Services in Rural Scotland* report recognised the importance of local services to the economic as well as social wellbeing and health of rural and remote communities. It also highlighted the need for service providers to take account of specific rural service needs and delivery solutions, which may differ to those of urban areas. Therefore, in our evidence sessions, we were keen not only to find out the extent to which the main messages of the report had been taken on board, but also to establish whether these service providers had any special arrangements for considering the specific service needs of rural communities. On the whole, our discussions suggested that the structure or working practices of most organisations did ensure that specific service needs of rural and remote areas could be, and were being, taken into account – even if no formal “rural proofing” mechanism existed. However, as in the original report, we did detect, in a few cases, the possibility of tension between national service standards and local/rural needs and priorities.

2. We also recognised, at an early stage, that a number of developments had taken place in the intervening period since the publication of the *Services in Rural Scotland* report. We therefore attempted to ensure that, in taking evidence, we identified the extent to which developments such as Community Planning, the creation of Communities Scotland, the publication of the Community Regeneration statement, and the foot and mouth disease outbreak, had impacted on the provision of services in rural areas.

Community Participation and Consultation

3. One of the main findings of *Services in Rural Scotland* was the importance of involving communities, and consulting them directly on matters relating to their service needs and priorities. It also recognised that rural communities themselves could be involved in providing services. In considering progress that has been made in relation to community participation and consultation on service needs, we considered three main areas: nation-wide mechanisms for encouraging community participation and consultation; mechanisms for encouraging consultation with particular sectors of communities; and the extent to which service providers are seeking to utilise these or other mechanisms to assess communities’ service needs.

Nationwide Mechanisms for Encouraging Community Engagement

4. In our discussions with service providers, we asked them about their engagement with communities. While we found evidence of consultation on particular issues, we did not detect any significant change in culture, away from ad hoc consultations towards on-going dialogue, which had been a key finding and recommendation within the original report.

5. One potential way forward, which was mentioned continually in our discussions with service providers, and in the written evidence we received, is

Community Planning² which has the potential to transform the delivery of services at a local level. We will discuss this in more detail later in the report, under the Partnership Working section. However, a key element of Community Planning, and one which may determine its ultimate success, is the degree to which it manages to engage with and involve local communities in its decision-making processes at a local level – including on how services are delivered.

6. We understand, from our meeting with a representative of the Community Planning Task Force, that, in recognition of the importance of involving communities in the Community Planning process, the Task Force established a working group chaired by Tom Divers, Chief Executive of Greater Glasgow Health Board to advise it on key issues related to involving communities in community planning, to identify and promote good practice on the involvement of communities in community planning and to make recommendations for future planning. We were told that the working group, which was nearing completion of its work, was preparing draft guidance which would form the basis of the guidance which would issue to all Community Planning Partnerships, alongside the legislative process. While the timing of our report means that we are reporting before that guidance is available, we note its potential significance in shaping community engagement in the community planning process, and in influencing service delivery in their local communities. It is therefore essential that such guidance is sensitive to rural circumstances, in particular to the scattered nature of many rural communities, and that it provides models which are flexible enough to suit diverse communities.

7. Although the Community Planning Task Force is well advanced in its consideration of a range of issues relating to the community planning process and, at the time of writing, the legislation was beginning its progress through Parliament, our meetings with the Task Force, CoSLA and other service providers suggested that there is still some way to go before community planning is well in place at a local level. Moreover, indications are that the mechanisms for taking community planning forward, including Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), are more advanced in some areas than in others. However, it is encouraging that there are already indications that local CPPs can play an important role in involving local communities as well as facilitating partnership working.

8. Given that it is unlikely that the community planning process will be able to deliver results in relation to community involvement and consultation across the board in the short term, **existing mechanisms** are likely to have to perform that role in the interim period. A number of existing mechanisms are in place which can facilitate active involvement by communities in the development of priorities for service development and delivery. While we note that Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs) can potentially play this role in deprived areas, there are very few SIPs in rural Scotland. Alternative mechanisms that might be utilised in this respect include Local Rural Partnerships and Councils of Voluntary Service (CVSs).

9. We took evidence from the Executive's new Public Service Delivery Group, which was set up in December 2001, to co-ordinate work aimed at improving the delivery of public services. We noted the Group's remit, and, while not strictly

² More information about Community Planning is available at <http://www.communityplanning.org.uk/>

responsible for “championing” the delivery of services in rural and remote areas, we were encouraged that the Group will work closely with the Rural Policy Team in the Environment and Rural Affairs Department to ensure that the findings of the *Services in Rural Scotland* report, and indeed the service needs and priorities of rural communities generally, are taken into account as the work of the Group moves forward. We also endorsed the comment made by one of the representatives from the Group whom we met, who said that they are being guided by the principle that citizens and communities do not care who is responsible for delivering a service – they simply want the service delivered.

10. We were also made aware of the work of the Civic Participation Unit within the Executive’s Social Research Division which has responsibility for providing advice and guidance on consultation to Scottish Executive policy divisions. It is also responsible for the internal Good Practice Guidance on Consultation and monitors Scottish Executive consultation practice. We did not meet any representatives from this Unit, so we were unable to ascertain the extent to which their work includes consideration of the appropriateness of different techniques for different kinds of communities, and in different locations, such as rural and remote areas. From the evidence we received, we perceived a risk that the growth in consultations could overload community and voluntary sector organisations in rural areas, and result in less effective engagement. The development of a culture of on-going dialogue should reduce the need for so many one-off consultation exercises. We therefore hope that our findings will be brought to the attention of the Civic Participation Unit.

11. Overall, while we noted the potential which Community Planning and the work of the Executive’s Public Service Delivery Group could have for improving the input of communities in influencing service delivery, we were disappointed to find so little evidence of service providers consulting communities on their service needs. It might therefore be helpful, as Community Planning is rolled out, to consider whether community input into decision-making could be enhanced by the use of **citizen surveys/community appraisals** to identify service needs and priorities. The merits of such an approach could be piloted in a small number of rural communities, with the results used by the Community Planning Partnership to shape more effective service delivery.

Mechanisms for Consultation with Particular Sectors of the Rural Community

12. In addition to promoting the involvement and consultation of the whole community on service matters, *Services in Rural Scotland* also highlighted the need, on occasions, to consult with particular groupings within communities, particularly those who may be excluded or may have difficulties in having their voices heard in normal consultation processes. In particular, the report pointed out that little is often known about **young people’s needs for rural services**, and that it was therefore particularly important for service providers to consult with this group in order to avoid their ‘exclusion’ from rural communities.

13. While there is little evidence of new policies or initiatives in this respect in response to the services report, our meeting with representatives of the Scottish Executive’s Education Department suggested that a number of existing initiatives in relation to this area remain ongoing. These are outlined in greater depth in the

Executive's response to the services report. Such initiatives include the Scottish Youth Summit (June 2000), the Scottish Youth Parliament, Youth Portal and Local Youth Forums. In addition, the Executive has aimed to facilitate the consultation of young people by agencies and organisations through the publication of a 'Consultation Toolkit'. The toolkit, which aims to assist policy makers and others in running consultation processes with children and young people was distributed to a variety of bodies, including all public authorities. We understand that an exercise is currently underway to determine how this document has been used, and identify whether there are any other organisations that may benefit from using it.

14. In our consideration of the engagement of different elements of rural communities, we became aware that there appear to be particular difficulties in engaging the **private sector** in local decision-making processes, even though they are important players in local communities. The evidence we received suggested that Community Planning has, to date, focussed on bringing public agencies together, and has not really been successful in involving the private sector. While Local Economic Forums may provide a route into Community Planning, and to local decision-making on service delivery, there needs to be greater clarity about the relationship between Forums and Community Planning Partnerships, before Community Planning becomes bedded down in local communities. Such consideration should also recognise the diversity of the private sector in rural and remote areas, and, where appropriate, acknowledge and address the barriers which may prevent some smaller rural businesses from participating in these structures (see Capacity Building section below).

Community Consultation by Service Providers on Specific Services

15. So far in this report, we have focused on mechanisms which might be used to help local communities realistically assess their general service needs and priorities. However, the Services Report also found that communities should be consulted regularly on their needs in relation to individual specific services. While these needs and those of individual service providers may not always tally, it is nonetheless important that service providers work together with local communities towards meeting these needs where possible. A lack of community consultation can result in otherwise innovative projects being negatively perceived by local communities.

16. Our meetings with public sector service providers suggested that **a variety of mechanisms** were in place to ensure consultation between service providers and local communities. At the most informal level, we heard how officials within a number of the Scottish Executive's Departments were encouraged to visit remote and rural areas to see for themselves the service delivery problems facing rural communities - a practice particularly mentioned by officials working within the spheres of health, local government and transport.

17. Many representatives also outlined mechanisms which were in place to ensure ongoing or follow-up consultation with rural communities or client groups. Indeed, the meetings suggested that in many cases continued assessment was an integral part of wider performance assessment processes. A particularly good example was that of the Executive's Health department where patient and general public involvement in the Performance Assessment Framework is an important part

of the performance assessment process. In addition, we understand that the process of assessment by patients had been well received by local healthcare providers, who were looking to include similar processes in their own internal performance systems.

18. On the transport front, community capacity building and involvement is a central element of the Executive's Rural Community Transport Initiative, and we noted that the Executive had funded the Community Transport Association to help rural communities to improve the quality of the bids being submitted for funding. We also noted that, while there are some existing mechanisms for consulting service users on ferry services, consideration is currently being given to future arrangements, including whether there should be a Scotland-wide users' body, with greater community involvement, for example, from community councils.

19. The evidence we received from the Executive's new Public Service Delivery Group revealed that the Executive intends taking forward work to address the poor data available on customer satisfaction across public services, so that it can measure more accurately improvements in delivery. Both HIE and Scottish Enterprise told us that they carry out regular customer satisfaction surveys, with Scottish Enterprise carrying out a major customer survey in 2001. As we have already highlighted, there may be merit in piloting some more general community appraisals to identify needs and levels of satisfaction across the full range of services.

20. From the evidence we received from private sector representatives, we noted that, while banks, for example, may carry out customer surveys, or trade bodies, such as the Federation of Small Businesses, may survey their members from time to time, there was not really any evidence of the private sector consulting or involving local communities in determining how their services might be delivered locally.

Community Capacity Building

21. In order for service providers to be able to engage effectively with rural communities, these communities need to have the capacity to participate. This is an issue which will need to be addressed in the Community Planning guidance, to ensure that Community Planning Partnerships invest in building the capacity of their local communities. We are aware that Communities Scotland's remit also includes community empowerment, and that it could potentially offer advice and financial assistance with the roll out of Community Planning to local areas. The Executive's Community Regeneration Statement, *Better Communities in Scotland: Closing the Gap*, was published as we neared the end of our work, and we therefore did not have the opportunity to discuss it in any detail either with Executive officials or with Communities Scotland. However, in taking the statement forward, we would urge Communities Scotland to find ways of assisting rural communities in engaging in the Community Planning process, and hope that it will be involved in the preparation of the guidance to be issued to Community Planning Partnerships. Such work should include consideration of the support which communities require both at the outset and on an on-going basis, and firm proposals for how this should be funded.

22. While communities may need assistance in building their capacity to be able to influence local service delivery, we also heard of the **needs of small businesses** in rural and remote areas, who also often lack the capacity to participate in Community Planning partnerships, and other local decision-making forums. We suggest that the position of small businesses should not be overlooked in considering the capacity-building needs of rural communities.

23. **Voluntary and community organisations** (sometimes referred to as social economy organisations), which often provide vitally important services in rural and remote communities, also have a need for support and assistance. While both HIE and Scottish Enterprise offer assistance to such organisations, we were told that both Networks see scope to improve and enhance the support they are providing. In addition, both HIE and Scottish Enterprise have recently commissioned studies to improve their understanding of the contribution of voluntary and community organisations. The Executive also commissioned a Review of the Social Economy, and the draft report has been presented to Ministers. We hope that the outcome of these various studies will lead to enhanced support arrangements for organisations working in the social economy in remote and rural areas.

24. While much of this is for the future, we know that there are already some mechanisms available to help rural communities build their capacity and confidence. These include the Executive's Rural Strategic Support Fund which provides funding for rural capacity building, including the establishment of Local Rural Partnerships, and is already encouraging links to be made between these Partnerships and the Community Planning process.

25. In its evidence to us, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) highlighted Initiative at the Edge as a successful initiative for involving communities, through the devolution of funding by agencies down to local communities. We hope that the experience and lessons to be learned from Initiative at the Edge can be used in taking forward community involvement and empowerment in other parts of rural Scotland.

26. This example highlighted for us the difference in existing practice across Scotland, and in particular between the Highlands and Islands and rural areas elsewhere in Scotland. HIE in implementing Smart Successful Scotland, has recognised the need to strengthen communities as one of its key policy objectives. HIE and the former Highlands and Islands Development Board have built up this relationship with its local communities for nearly 40 years.

27. HIE's ability to work directly with communities has enabled it to become involved with local groups who seek to provide their own services through:

- Discretionary capital assistance for community projects
- Assistance and advice to multi-purpose village halls particularly for co-located service delivery. The HIE network is involved in virtually every new community facility project in the Highlands and Islands, including multi-partner voluntary energy centres
- Support for innovative community services such as the mobile Screen Machine Cinema.

- Support and encouragement of the social economy, particularly Community Co-operatives.
- The leadership shown in the establishment of its Community Land Unit
- Support for community-led arts and cultural initiatives through sectoral bodies

28. HIE has also been working closely with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), local authorities and other bodies to increase the capacity building of the community and voluntary sectors, through:

- The encouragement of Investors in People (IIP) registrations across the community and voluntary sectors
- Supporting the HIE LECs to adopt the community skills aid pioneered by the Caithness LEC
- Partnership working with the SCVO's Inverness office that deals with rural policy
- The development of business and management advice services accessible to community and voluntary sector bodies, such as the Single Entry Point
- Support for community information dissemination through conferences seminars and web sites
- Network community development seminars with staff from partner organisations, such as the local authorities and the lottery distributors

29. Further research is needed on the Highlands and Islands experience and the perceived variations in support for service delivery elsewhere in rural Scotland. Recommendations from such a study might cover the need for local partners including Scottish Enterprise LECs, Local Authorities, Community Planning Partnerships, Communities Scotland, and the voluntary sector, to develop rationales for addressing these issues.

Partnership Working

30. Partnership working is a key theme of the *Services in Rural Scotland* report, and many of its findings and recommendations emphasised the need for organisations to work together, and with local communities, to deliver innovative and viable approaches to service provision in remote and rural areas. We therefore identified partnership working as a key issue which we wished to examine in the evidence we received and in our discussions with service providers. As we will describe below, the picture which emerged is a very mixed one, with commitment to, and practice of, partnership working differing greatly across organisations and areas.

Community Planning

31. The *Services in Rural Scotland* report identified Community Planning as a crucial development, and recommended that its development and roll out should reflect rural circumstances. Throughout our evidence sessions, we heard continually about Community Planning, and the potential role which it could play in transforming service delivery in remote and rural areas. We have already mentioned the issue of how communities might be engaged in the process. However, from our evidence, we were also able to develop a picture of how Community Planning might roll out in remote and rural areas, and the issues which are emerging.

32. We took evidence from a representative of the Community Planning Task Force who told us that the Task Force was aware that, if Community Planning is to succeed, then efforts need to be made to ensure that all partners are able and willing to participate in partnership working. Therefore, in addition to the Local Government Bill, which proposes placing a duty on certain bodies to participate in community planning, the Task Force set up a working group to look specifically at the issue of partnership working. The main output from that group will feed into the Bill guidance for use by all Community Planning partners. We also noted that the Accounts Commission for Scotland will have a role in monitoring the implementation of Community Planning, and should report where agencies are failing to engage meaningfully in the process.

33. From the evidence we received, it would appear that the **roll out of Community Planning in remote and rural areas** is, in some cases, more advanced than in urban areas, although, on the whole, Community Planning has not yet been translated to a more local level. It was also difficult for us to gauge in any accurate way the degree of commitment to Community Planning by different agencies and sectors, although, as we will touch on later in this section, the private sector does not really seem to be engaged in Community Planning to any significant extent (although the Federation of Small Businesses is engaged in Community Planning in some areas). Indeed, from our discussions with the Banks, they did not appear too convinced of the benefits of involvement, and would need to see an advantage for their business in such involvement. On the other hand, most Banks were not aware of even being invited to participate in Community Planning or even Local Economic Forums. This is an issue which will need to be addressed if Community Planning is to make a positive difference to service delivery, especially in rural areas.

34. As we have mentioned already in this report, the **role of Local Economic Forums**, in relation to Community Planning, appears to require some clarification, as we have detected some friction in some rural areas about the respective roles of each partnership, particularly in relation to economic development.

35. This leads on to the more general issue of the **proliferation of partnerships**. The *Services in Rural Scotland* report highlighted the pressures which local partners in rural areas can face if they are being asked to serve on a variety of different partnerships. This can be a particular burden for community groups, if they are being asked to participate in several partnerships. We agree that, from the evidence we have collected, there would appear to be real benefits to be gained from a rationalisation of partnerships at a local level, particularly once Community Planning is bedded down, and we were told that there are already some examples of this happening in some areas.

36. In terms of Community Planning Partnerships playing a key role in rural service provision, it was suggested to us that a key issue was the **extent to which resources would be devolved to the partnerships**. We heard of work going on in Dumfries and Galloway on asset integration which could inform future decisions on

this front. The Executive's consultation on Community Budgeting³ is a welcome development, and we hope that any action arising from this will take account of, and where possible benefit, rural communities.

Partnership Working Between Public Bodies

37. The evidence we received confirmed that, in general, policy bodies are already engaged in partnership working to some extent. For example, in the HIE area, all Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) are involved in partnership working. Similar evidence was provided for the Scottish Enterprise area. Communities Scotland also reported a long tradition of partnership working, both with housing associations and with local authorities – although this latter relationship may need to change given the Agency's new monitoring role. We noted that Communities Scotland has restructured from 5 regional to 8 area offices, which should facilitate partnership working at a local level. It is important that such partnership working is monitored and measured, to ensure that such engagement is taking place across all parts of rural Scotland.

38. However, while there is a commitment to partnership working among many bodies at a national level, we are aware that the **success of partnerships at a local level is more mixed** with doubts often expressed about the commitment of one or more of the partner bodies. There are a number of possible reasons for this, and we highlight a few below.

39. One issue which emerged in some of the evidence sessions was the issue of the **boundaries of different agencies**, and a feeling that partnerships were working better in areas – such as Orkney, Shetland, Borders and Dumfries and Galloway – where there was co-terminosity of boundaries for the main public agencies (e.g. local authority, LEC and health board). We recognise that this is a highly sensitive issue, the solution of which lies well outwith the remit of our work. However, we considered it important to mention it here, given that it appears to be an important factor in the success of partnership working and service delivery in some remote and rural areas.

40. Another issue which was raised during our evidence sessions was the tendency for the success of partnerships to be dependent not only on the approach taken by the individual representatives round the table, but also on the **culture of the organisations** involved and their attitude to partnership working. Partnerships worked least well where there was a prevalence of "patch protection" going on.

Partnership Working between Public Agencies and the Voluntary Sector

41. We found much evidence of public agencies and the voluntary sector working together in both formal partnerships, and through joint initiatives. For example, SCVO told us about a growth in the number of centres being opened, where voluntary organisations could share space and facilities, and reduce their overheads and running costs. The HIE Network is helping to fund such centres, including the Fort William voluntary sector energy centre and Voluntary Action Orkney, which they

³ *Community Budgeting: A consultation document on local services and community engagement*, Scottish Executive, June 2002. Available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/social

see as not only helping the voluntary sector by cutting overheads, but also encouraging partnership working between the bodies sharing the premises, and the emergence of innovative approaches. We also heard that these seem to be most successful when they evolve organically at a local level, rather than being “forced” on them. Across rural Scotland, there are also other examples of joint working, including examples of the voluntary sector being contracted to run a service on behalf of a local agency, in particular the local authority. We were also told of cases where there have been secondments and interchanges of staff between public agencies and the voluntary sector, to help with the cross-fertilisation of ideas.

42. However, despite these positive examples, we were also made aware of **disparities in the capacity of the voluntary sector** across different parts of rural Scotland to engage in partnership and joint working. This is linked both to the availability of long term funding and the voluntary sector organisation’s abilities to access the necessary training to enhance skills, etc. While the Voluntary Sector Compact guides relations between the Executive and the voluntary sector at a national level, there is evidence beginning to emerge of similar agreements or codes between the voluntary sector and local agencies, including local government. We believe that **such a development could greatly enhance relations between the voluntary sector and local agencies**, and could in turn contribute to better service delivery for local communities.

Partnership working Between Public/ Voluntary Sector and Private Sector.

43. We found very few examples of private sector involvement in partnership or joint working, either formally or on an informal basis. The Royal Bank of Scotland did give us a couple of examples of partnership working – for example, working with Western Isles Council on a loan guarantee scheme, and sponsoring LEC roadshows in the Borders - but, on the whole, these were exceptions rather than the general rule. Our meetings with representatives from the private sector suggested a number of possible explanations for this – e.g. a lack of local structure/ focus within larger organisations; poorer links between the sectors; less synergy between the different sector’s remits/ roles; barriers imposed on sharing of information due to needs of commercial confidence and competition; lack of a clear (commercial) benefit for the company. We were however encouraged to hear that many of the banks were very interested in the Community Mall/multi-functional facility concept, and had participated in some meetings to discuss it. (We will discuss this further in Section B.)

44. While the Banks are naturally constrained by competition in the extent to which they are prepared to work together, there is an example – Social Investment Scotland - where this has already happened, and we would hope that this could lead to other joint working to benefit remote and rural areas.

Monitoring and Evaluating Partnership Working

45. We noted that the Community Planning Task Force has been unable to find one single tool available for measuring the effectiveness of partnership activity, although there are a range of models available, to measure effectiveness of a variety of different levels. We were told that a model developed by Scottish Enterprise

Dunbartonshire was particularly promising, but we did not have time to look at this as part of our work. However, whatever model is used, ***it is important that this evaluates partnership working not only from the basis of success in rationalising partnership working, but also takes account of the effectiveness of the partnership working which is taking place.***

Innovative Approaches & Sharing Best Practice

Innovative Approaches

46. A key finding from the *Services in Rural Scotland* report was that there were already a large number of innovative approaches to service provision in remote and rural areas across Scotland and further afield, but that more needed to be done to promote these and spread good practice.

47. As the report emphasised, innovative approaches to service provision are particularly important for rural communities. We came across a large variety of examples of innovative service provision across rural Scotland, although we did not find any whose development had been influenced by the findings of the services report. There was, however, enthusiasm among public, voluntary and private sector representatives to consider more innovative approaches, such as sharing premises, remote or mobile provision. HIE told us about their mobile surgeries, and the support they had given to the Screen Machine. The Banks, in particular, are already making use of mobile banks and home visits/“flying” bankers, but this provision is not universal, even across remote and rural areas, and we were told that there continue to be concerns among the banks about providing banking services in community facilities, for example, for security reasons.

48. We also heard about a number of developments being promoted by the Executive to facilitate better and more innovative service provision, making particular use of information technology – for example, the broadband pilot, Modernising Government Fund promoting electronic kiosks and information points, developing call centre best practice, a target to provide public access internet points within 5 miles of all rural households, supported by a 24-hour training support line, and the piloting of a debtline telephone service in Fife. Many of these initiatives were highlighted in the Executive’s response to the services report, which was published in September 2001. In addition, the Executive announced in early 2002 that it would be supporting 2 integrated rural transport pilots, and these are due to be established in the coming months.

49. While we noted these examples, we were concerned that we did not find many new examples of innovative approaches to service delivery in remote and rural areas, inspired by the services report. While there appears to be a willingness among most providers to consider innovative approaches, there continue to be “obstacles”, whether real or perceived, blocking any progress – for example, lack of funding to kickstart an initiative, unwillingness of one partner to “give ground”/patch protection, commercial considerations. While sharing good practice (which we will move on to discuss) can go some of the way in encouraging more innovative approaches, we suspect that this, in itself, is unlikely to spark any wholesale changes in the way services are delivered in remote and rural areas. Steps might

therefore need to be taken to ensure that innovative approaches are developed and rolled out in remote and rural areas. On this note, it will be interesting to see whether work to take forward the Community Mall concept can help in any way. (This is discussed later in this report.)

Sharing Good Practice

50. We followed up the report's findings on the importance of sharing good practice, and looked for evidence of progress to enhance opportunities on this front. We are pleased to report that we found many examples of new developments which should enhance the exchange of information on rural service provision.

51. For example, the Executive's response of September 2001 referred to a number of steps which it was taking to facilitate networking and dissemination of good practice – for example, by supporting (along with SCVO and CoSLA) an annual rural services conference – the first held in Inverness last September, and the second in Dumfries in October 2002 – and a Rural Community Transport Conference in July 2001; commissioning a scoping study into establishing a rural community gateway website; and preparing a number of good practice guides, including one of case studies of innovative approaches to service delivery in remote and rural areas, one looking at international examples, and a good practice guide focusing on Rural Community Transport schemes. To date, only the last of these guides – on community transport – has been published. Since producing its response, the Executive has announced that it will be supporting the setting up of a Rural Community Gateway website, and hopes that it will be up and running by early 2003. It is also undertaking work to map the provision of key services in remote and rural areas, and expects to be able to publish the output of this work later in 2002.

52. Aside from the Executive, many other service providers have been working to encourage the sharing of ideas and good practice. For example, SCVO is rolling out its voluntary sector portal (www.workwithus.com), with its interactive forum. While the portal does not have a specific rural channel at present, this could be developed at a later stage. HIE told us that they hold meetings with LECs several times a year to encourage LECs to learn from one another, as well as supporting a number of conferences throughout the year, including a recent one on community websites. A number of LECs also have their own local websites which include information about local initiatives, many of which are linked to the HIE site. Scottish Enterprise aims to use its own portal to encourage exchanges of good practice across its Network, with a target date of March 2004, as well as discussing good practice at meetings of the Network's Rural Group. Children in Scotland also reported on the wide range of activities which it provides to help spread experience and good practice.

53. We found limited evidence of any efforts among the private sector bodies we met, to share good practice either across their own organisations or with other companies – although the Co-operative Society does run training and best practice seminars for its members.

54. While we were encouraged to hear of so many examples of how organisations are trying to spread good practice, there is a risk that the process becomes so proliferated with information available from different sources and in

different forms, that those who need to access the information find it far from straightforward to do so. This is an issue which will need to be watched carefully over the coming years, particularly as the SCVO portal and the Rural Community Gateway Website become fully operational. We also feel that it is important that there are opportunities to hear about good practice at different levels, including from other countries such as Scandinavia, Australia and Canada.

SECTION B: KEY SERVICES

1. In Section A, we identified a number of key overarching themes from the *Services in Rural Scotland* report, and provided our assessment of the degree of progress which has been made since January 2001. However, while many of these themes are applicable across all service provision in remote and rural areas, the original report highlighted a number of the key characteristics of rural service provision which were particularly important to rural communities, and which required specific action. In discussing how we would approach our task, we considered whether we should look specifically at the same range of services, given that some aspects of service provision had moved forward, and that there was perhaps a need to look more closely at community self-provision of services. However, given the remit that we had been set, we decided that we needed to focus our attention on the key characteristics of rural service provision identified in the original report. In this section, we will therefore report on progress which has been made in the areas of:

- transport and access to services;
- retail and other business services;
- multi-purpose buildings;
- information and advice services; and
- childcare and services for young people.

Transport and Access to Services

2. The issue of transport, and its role in providing access to services, is a crucial issue across rural communities, and one which, not surprisingly, features significantly in the *Services in Rural Scotland* report. In particular, the report encouraged not only more imaginative and innovative approaches to rural transport provision, but better integration between the forms of transport already being provided. It also encouraged the spreading of the good practice which already exists in many remote and rural areas.

3. We took evidence, amongst others, from officials from the Executive's Transport Divisions who were able to update us on the work underway on the rural transport front, some of which had already been reported in the Executive's response of September 2001. One interesting finding from the evaluation of the Rural Transport Fund, published in July 2001, was that the Fund provided good value for money, and had included the finding that 25% of passengers using Community Transport services for individuals would have been housebound had it not been for the services provided by the Fund. One of the issues which is frequently raised is the issue of on-going revenue funding for projects which are important to rural communities. We were therefore interested to hear that the Rural Community Transport Initiative (an element of the Fund) is now offering on-going revenue funding for some projects, in recognition of the importance of some of these projects to the communities they serve. We were also told that officials have good information on the location of the major gaps in community transport provision, and are actively encouraging the development of projects in these areas. To assist with this, the Executive has provided funding for an additional rural officer for the Community Transport Association. We welcome this investment by the Executive in the CTA, which is bringing benefits to rural communities

4. In terms of spreading good practice, the rural community transport good practice guide published by the Executive in July 2001 has been very successful, with a second print run required to meet demand. We also note that the Executive's Health Department is examining ways in which examples of good practice in the provision of transport to health services might be identified and potentially replicated elsewhere.

5. The need for better integration of the transport already available in local areas was a key message from the services report, and is reflected in the good practice guide mentioned earlier. In March 2002, to coincide with the publication of its Transport Delivery Report, the Executive announced that it would be supporting 2 integrated transport pilots in rural areas. In September 2002, the Executive announced that the first pilot would be in Aberdeenshire. We welcome this development, which should produce some useful lessons for the provision of transport in other remote and rural areas.

6. In addition to the services supported through the Rural Transport Fund, we recognise that the Executive also supports many lifeline air and ferry services to some of the more remote and island communities. We were encouraged to hear that there is a willingness to consider changes in the running of ferry services to improve access to services – e.g., changes in the ferry times to and from Gigha had enabled schoolchildren to travel to and from school on the mainland each day – although the regulation of air services meant that it was more difficult to provide such flexibility. It is important that investment in vital infrastructure projects takes account of their potential impact on the quality of life of communities, and we hope that the Executive will continue to consider positively any proposals for infrastructure projects which will improve accessibility for those living in remote and rural areas.

7. The services report recognises that it can be difficult to separate out transport needs from the need to access services, and recommends that further work is done to look at **rural accessibility issues**. Again, in the evidence from Executive officials, we noted that a study into Rural Accessibility⁴, commissioned by the Executive from Derek Halden Associates, had been published in May 2002. This study provides a framework for benchmarking the accessibility of a rural community, and a methodology for measuring the effects of changes in service delivery arrangements, as well as transport changes. We did not have time to consider this report in detail, but hope that, in considering how to roll out its findings, ways will be found to ensure that local agencies and communities are encouraged to make use of the framework and methodology in addressing local service needs.

8. The *Services in Rural Scotland* report recognised that, in addition to addressing transport issues to improve access to services, other solutions should also be considered, where it might be more appropriate either to bring the service to the users, or to use remote provision. We heard of a number of examples of mobile services being provided – for example, mobile banks, home banking visits/ “flying banker”, Screen Machine mobile cinema in the Highlands. However, we did not find

⁴ Derek Halden and Associates, *Rural Accessibility*, Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, May 2002. Available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/kd01

any evidence of an expansion of, or even plans to expand, this kind of provision, to remote and rural areas not currently benefiting from mobile services.

9. By contrast, **remote provision of services**, in particular using the internet or phones, appears to be increasing, particularly in the banking and retail fields. We were unable to investigate the extent to which this is transforming service provision in rural areas, and in particular the impact it is having on physical services. However, we noted that, in taking forward its 21st Century Government agenda, the Executive recognises the need for a multi-channel approach, using face to face, as well as internet and telephone channels. It would be helpful for progress on this front to be monitored, to ensure that remote and rural areas benefit fully from these developments. We were disappointed that the network of Digital Champions has not been extended throughout rural Scotland.

Retail and other Business Services

10. Shops and other retail services are considered vital services by rural communities, and the *Services in Rural Scotland* report made a number of recommendations for safeguarding and enhancing the provision of retail services in remote and rural areas.

11. One of the issues raised in the report was the extent of **support and business advice available to village shops**. In their evidence to us, both Enterprise Networks confirmed that, while in the past there may have been some uncertainty about whether they treated retail businesses as small businesses, this is now changing, and village shops were now able to access start up advice, business advice and training in the same way as other small businesses – although Scottish Enterprise admitted that the availability of this range of services to village shops may vary across LECs, depending on the ability of LECs to deliver these services. HIE told us that its LECs can also offer development grants for lone stores in remote and rural areas, and in a couple of LEC areas – Western Isles and Argyll – specific attention was being given to local/community shops. From this evidence, and other evidence sessions, we reached the conclusion that the services already available were serving the needs of rural businesses, and that there did not appear to be a significant demand for a separate additional scheme to assist village shops and other retail businesses in remote and rural areas. Similarly, we detected very mixed support for any kind of business improvement grants. However, there is probably more that can be done by LECs and others to publicise the services and assistance already available to village shops to ensure that those who need this help know about it.

12. One of the mechanisms identified as assisting retail services in rural areas was **rates relief**, and the report made a number of recommendations for how the current rates relief scheme could be extended. We were pleased to note that the Executive had acted on the findings of the services report and, following a consultation exercise during 2001, Ministers had decided to extend the scope of the existing village shop rate relief scheme to include single-owned petrol filling stations, small food shops and public houses/hotels/inns which provided a community service. In addition, the rateable value threshold for filling stations and public houses/hotels/inns will be increased to £9,000 (the rateable value threshold for small

food shops is £6,000). ATMs situated in settlements of less than 3,000 people in designated rural areas will also be exempt from non-domestic rates. These provisions are included in the Local Government Bill currently before Parliament. Additionally, with effect from April 2003, the Executive will be introducing a new rate relief scheme for small businesses. While we welcome all of these developments, we have noted a potential problem with regard to properties in multiple use (e.g. shop, bank, post office and other services sharing premises), where the size of the property may push the rateable value above the threshold for small business rate relief.

13. The *Services in Rural Scotland* report singled out **post offices** as an important rural service, and one around which some innovative approaches to service provision could be developed. We were therefore interested to hear of the developments which have taken place since the publication of the services report, to help rural post offices to stay open. These developments include the appointment of Rural Transfer Advisors (6 in Scotland) to help prevent or reverse post office closures in remote and rural areas, by working with postmasters and local communities to develop imaginative solutions to keep post offices open, and offer information on the range of grants and initiatives available through different organisations. Another development is the Sub Post Office Start Up Capital Subsidy Scheme, a £2 million scheme administered by DTI, to provide an additional source of funding for situations where a rural post office has recently closed, or is likely to close, and where the post office would be lost to the community, without the payment of subsidy. To date, we were told that approximately 10% of successful applications to this Fund are from Scotland. We welcome these developments, and the news that some communities are taking advantage of them to consider taking over the running of their community post offices. However, in the time available to us, we were unable to speak to any of the Rural Transfer Advisors, or to any beneficiaries of the Capital Subsidy Scheme, and thus were unable to assess the real impact which these developments are having on service provision in rural areas.

14. One of the key findings of the services report was the potential for making greater use of post offices for the delivery of various services. In particular, the report highlighted 2 initiatives which were considered to have potential for roll-out to other rural areas. The first of these was the **Digital Highland pilot**, which we were disappointed to learn had not proceeded as planned, for a variety of reasons. One reason was that Consignia was also involved in the Government General Practitioner – **Your Guide** – pilot in Leicestershire and Rutland, and it was felt that it would be better to await the outcome of that pilot before proceeding any further with the Highland pilot. The Your Guide pilot was completed some months ago, and, at the time of preparing this report, the results of the evaluation of the pilot were still being considered by both UK and Executive Ministers, before decisions are taken on possible roll out. While we cannot comment on the merits of the Your Guide pilot itself, we hope that any decisions to roll out the initiative to other areas will include rural communities in Scotland, and that its delivery can take account of the nature and size of these communities.

15. While the services report placed great emphasis on the potential of post offices to deliver a wide range of services on behalf of other service providers, we have noted that the nature of many of our rural post offices means that these might

not always be suitable premises from which to offer a variety of services. Therefore, we believe it is important that, in considering how best to deliver services in a rural community, a flexible approach is taken to ensure that the most appropriate location is utilised.

16. Some banks are already making use of post offices to deliver some of their services. While **banking services** are important to rural communities, it is recognised that it is not always viable for banks to continue to operate branches in rural communities, and it is therefore important that opportunities are taken to deliver services in imaginative ways, to ensure that rural bank customers are not disadvantaged. We took evidence from a number of the high street banks, and were encouraged to hear that most operated a policy of not closing branches which were the “last bank in town”. We also noted that some already make use of mobile banks, home visits and agency arrangements (particularly with the Post Office) to deliver banking services to those unable to access a bank branch. We also heard of a pilot in England, involving the 4 major Banks, where each Bank accepted transactions from customers of the other Banks. We hope that the outcomes of this pilot can be considered by the banks in Scotland, to see if there is any potential to replicate the pilot here. Despite these developments, there appears to be a general reluctance among the banks to deliver services via community facilities or to share premises with other banks or services, mainly due, we were told, to concerns over security. Many of the banks, however, were interested in the Community Mall concept, and had participated in meetings to discuss how it might be taken forward. We hope that the banks may be able to find a way of participating in a pilot Mall, and of addressing their security concerns.

17. While some Banks have arrangements which enable their customers to make transactions over post office counters, we noted that, at present, it is not possible for customers to withdraw cash from post offices using bank cards. Given that, in many remote and rural areas, the post office might well be the only source of cash, due to the absence of banks or ATMs, we hope that it will be possible for the Banks and the Post Office to overcome the obstacles, particularly with regard to technology, to allow cash withdrawals to be made. This will be particularly important, given the transfer of benefits payments to bank accounts, and the introduction of the Universal Bank and basic bank accounts.

18. **Credit Unions** are an important source of finance for the most financially excluded in society, including in remote and rural areas. We were therefore pleased to note that work is underway to encourage the development of the credit union movement throughout Scotland, including in rural areas, following the publication of the Credit Union Action Plan and the establishment of the Scottish Credit Union Partnership, with 2 members representing rural areas.

Information and Advice Services

19. In this report, we have already highlighted a number of examples of how the availability of information and advice is being facilitated and enhanced in rural areas. The *Services in Rural Scotland* report emphasised not only the need to ensure that those living in remote and rural areas had opportunities to access information and

advice, but that, where possible, such information was made available in a variety of existing locations, including post offices.

20. The development of the **Rural Community Gateway Website** will be one channel through which information and advice will be available to rural communities, and we hope that it will act as a one-stop shop, providing links to other sources of information and advice. Access to this Website and others should be enhanced by the programme of providing Public Internet Access points in places already visited by the public, such as hairdressers, village halls, etc. It would be useful to monitor this initiative to see what impact it has in improving access to services for those living in rural communities.

21. We also heard of a number of other **initiatives which are aimed at improving access to information and advice**. These include the Your Guide pilot, the Scottish Enterprise Network's Small Business Gateway, funding to expand Money Advice Services, and a pilot debt-line telephone advice service in Fife. While none of these are designed specifically for rural areas, they could potentially offer significant benefits for those living in our rural communities. We also note that bodies such as the Councils of Voluntary Service (CVS) play a vital role in the provision of information to the voluntary sector, while trade bodies such as the Scottish Grocers Federation perform a similar role for their members.

22. One issue which arose in our discussions was the issue of **utilising existing service outlets**, such as post offices and local authority service outlets, to deliver information and advice. In some remote and rural areas, more than one service provider may operate an outlet, meaning that information and advice is available in more than one location. While it is for service providers to make decisions about how to offer their services, we have observed that, in some instances, it might well be more viable for information to be available in only one location, rather than being offered through various outlets in the same village. We believe that service providers need to be encouraged to work together, and to make better use of existing buildings. Our comments about post offices, made earlier in this section, are also relevant here.

Multi-Purpose Buildings

23. The *Services in Rural Scotland* report recommended that greater consideration be given to the sharing of buildings and facilities by service providers as a means of reducing costs and overheads, and helping to make services more viable, as well as more accessible for rural dwellers. Throughout this report, we have already highlighted a number of ways in which multi-purpose facilities are being used, or considered by service providers, and some of the obstacles and barriers that seem to exist.

24. **Multi-Purpose Community Buildings (sometimes also referred to as Village Halls)** are widely acknowledged as one potential way in which services can be located together under one roof, and the services report included some existing examples of multi-purpose village halls. We are pleased that the Scottish Executive gave priority to applications for multi-purpose village halls, in the 2002-03 round of the Local Capital Grants Scheme. However, we note that the cost of building and

maintaining such facilities can be high, and requires significantly more capital and revenue funding than is available from funds like the Local Capital Grants Scheme. Therefore, there would appear to be a need at a local level for communities and service providers to work together on the development of such facilities, including raising the necessary resources. We also heard of an example – in South Ayrshire – where the local authority was reviewing the use of all its community centres and village halls to see if there was any potential for multi-usage.

25. We note that there appears to be little progress in the provision of training and support for village hall committees and others involved in running village halls. Our discussions confirmed the need for communities to be supported at all stages in taking forward proposals to build and run a village hall, and we therefore hope that this will be addressed, at both a national and local level. In terms of spreading good practice and learning lessons from developments of this nature, we note that the Executive is currently working on a good practice guide about multi-purpose facilities.

26. One of the key recommendations in the services report was that consideration should be given to taking forward the **Community Mall** one-stop shop concept. We note that the Executive has facilitated meetings with the Enterprise Networks, CoSLA, the banks, Consignia and SCVO, to discuss the possibility of developing pilot Community Malls. Scottish Enterprise Borders and Scottish Borders Council are progressing work to establish a pilot Community Mall in Walkerburn, and have already held meetings at a local level with the community and local businesses. A feasibility study is being commissioned, and it is possible that this pilot could get under way within the coming months. In the HIE area, consideration has been given to establishing a “virtual” Community Mall in Orkney, but this has proven more difficult to get off the ground, due to the fact that there are already similar projects operating in the area. It is encouraging that service providers, including the banks and Consignia, are interested in being involved in the pilots. Our discussions have highlighted the need for issues such as displacement of service provision to be considered carefully by those developing Community Mall facilities. There is also a need to ensure that there are opportunities for bottom-up proposals for the development of Community Malls to be considered and progressed. Notwithstanding these reservations, we hope that it will be possible to take forward at least one Community Mall pilot in the coming months, which will be fully evaluated with the lessons learned passed on to other areas considering similar approaches.

27. While the services report promoted the Community Mall concept, it also recognised that the sharing of premises was not a new idea, and that there were already a number of examples of where this was working successfully. Earlier in this report, we have mentioned the voluntary sector energy centres in Lochaber and Orkney. The Co-operative Group also told us that they offer space in some of their stores to credit unions. While we also heard some examples from the banks of using community facilities to deliver banking services on a regular basis, this did not appear to happen on a large scale, and issues relating to security appear to be inhibiting the banks from exploring further opportunities to share premises.

28. One issue raised in the services report was the need for funders to exercise flexibility in imposing **service and building standards**, to take account of rural

circumstances, and the need, for example, for a village hall to have multiple uses. In written evidence, Sportscotland told us that their lottery programmes are designed to ensure that any targets or standards attached to awards take account of the particular circumstances of rural areas. The New Opportunities Fund also reported that, while some standards are set to secure important requirements, such as health and safety standards, it does recognise that other standards may not always be appropriate in all circumstances. The Fund provided the example of the New Opportunities for PE and Sport programme which is funding sports facilities across Scotland, and where Case Managers working alongside local authorities are adopting a flexible approach in interpreting the standards set to suit the area and circumstances involved. These responses are encouraging. However, in the time available to us, we were unable to check whether this flexibility was being matched by other funding bodies, nor whether communities could point to specific examples of this being put into practice.

29. The evidence we received from Communities Scotland also highlighted another aspect of building standards which can have an important impact in a remote or rural setting. The example cited concerned the building of houses in remote or island settings, where the weather conditions experienced in these areas means that roof tiles needed to be secured more firmly than is required in other areas, adding to the cost of construction. Communities Scotland told us that this demonstrated how the system which they had in place allowed for flexibility between areas to take account of local circumstances, and for assessment against peers to allow for the comparisons. We were encouraged by this, but were unable, in the time available, to ascertain whether any other bodies operated similar approaches.

Childcare and Young People

Childcare

30. Childcare was identified as a crucial service in remote and rural areas, but one which required some further attention to overcome the obstacles being experienced in the provision and accessibility of such services. We noted that, while both Enterprise Networks reported some activity to support childcare provision – for example Scottish Enterprise Borders seconded a member of staff to the Council's childcare department to assist in developing a local childcare strategy – both admitted that there was a mixed performance across their Networks.

31. In terms of support for childcare provision in remote and rural areas, we noted the services being provided by Highland Pre-School Services to voluntary childcare and early years agencies. This includes the Highland and Moray Accredited Training Services which delivers vocational training; flexible models of committee management support, in which Highland Pre-School Services can be subcontracted by management committees to handle recruitment, employment and staff development issues, or even to run facilities; and family support services. It also operates a special needs grants scheme to help with the provision of special needs care in the Highland area.

32. One of the findings in the *Services in Rural Scotland* report was that there was a need for better information about the provision of childcare services in rural

Scotland, and about the take up of Childcare Tax Credit in rural areas. We note the work being done by Children in Scotland, as part of its Growing Up in Rural Scotland programme, which should help raise awareness of childcare services in rural Scotland. We are however disappointed to note that the Executive has decided not to go ahead with the proposed research into the Childcare Tax Credit uptake, and hope that this decision will be reconsidered.

33. We were also unable to find any evidence of work being taken forward to assist small and medium-sized enterprises to take advantage of childcare facilities, and hope this will be addressed. Children in Scotland did report on work it was doing with LECs on the links between childcare and economic development, and it will be interesting to see the results of this work. There might also be merit in public agencies in rural areas doing more to provide childcare places for their workforce, with some places also being made available to other businesses

34. Overall, despite the examples mentioned above, we did not find much evidence of progress in the uptake and provision of childcare to rural communities since the publication of the *Services in Rural Scotland* report, while issues regarding integration of services, sustainability, patterns of delivery, accessibility and staff retention and development remain.

Young People

35. We have already mentioned earlier in this report some of the developments to encourage the empowerment and involvement of young people – these include the Youth Summit, Youth Portal and Eurodesk. The Youth Parliament ensures that rural young people can play a full role by providing subsidised travel (and, in some cases, accommodation) costs via the new Young Scot Scottish Youth Parliament card. In some remote and rural areas, engagement in the Youth Parliament is particularly high (e.g. Shetland), although this is by no means a uniform picture, and appears largely dependent on the enthusiasm of individual local authorities.

36. We were particularly interested to hear about the Consultation Toolkit which has been developed to help agencies and organisations consult young people. The Toolkit has been distributed widely to a variety of bodies, including all public agencies, and an exercise is currently underway to assess how the document is being used and identify whether any other organisations might benefit from using it. We would suggest that the results of this exercise should include an assessment of the extent to which it is assisting in consulting young people in different geographical settings, including remote and rural areas, and that this information is made available to national and local agencies.

37. There are also 2 mapping exercises underway. The first, by Youthlink, is mapping specific youth services to improve understanding of the nature and extent of provision; while the second is mapping youth justice services. It will be important that the results of both exercises are able to be disaggregated on a rural:urban basis so that any discrepancies can be addressed.

CONCLUSION

1. In this report, we have provided our assessment of the progress which has been made in taking forward the findings and recommendations contained in the *Services in Rural Scotland* report, published in January 2001. While we were encouraged by the level of awareness of the report among service providers we spoke to and from whom we received written evidence, we were disappointed that more progress had not been made to implement the report. We have pointed out the possible reasons for this. These, along with our other main findings and conclusions, can be summarised as follows:

Overall

- Many of the findings and recommendations of the original report were aspirational in nature, making it more difficult to monitor progress than would have been the case if these had been more robust and targeted. It also resulted in some service providers appearing to have paid little more than lip service to the report.
- It is difficult to assess the extent to which the Services Report directly contributed to better provision of services in remote and rural areas. However, we welcome the general higher priority being attached to service delivery. It is notable that a considerable number of service delivery projects/ initiatives are being taken forward beyond the scope of the Report's specific recommendations.
- There continues to be a need for a more robust approach to assessing and measuring rural service needs and how delivery is meeting these needs. An enhanced evidential base & research, as well as mechanisms for assessing satisfaction among rural dwellers with the level and quality of provision of services, is essential.

Community Participation and Consultation

- Community Planning has huge potential to transform how services are planned and provided, but service providers will need to consult with local communities through existing mechanisms in the meantime (SIPs, LRPs, CVSs). Community Budgeting, bringing all partners' budgets to the table, is another potentially crucial development.
- Changes in the organisational structures of bodies involved in local partnership working (e.g. Communities Scotland) need to be sensitive to the impact these changes will have on service delivery in rural areas.

Community Capacity Building

- The need for longer term support and funding for community capacity building and for the voluntary sector. Variations in existing support in different geographical areas (in particular between the HIE and non-HIE rural areas) should be addressed.
- There may be value in having local Compacts to improve core support for voluntary organisations, delivering important services in rural areas.
- There is a need for a greater interface with Banks and other larger businesses in rural communities, to encourage participation in local partnerships.
- Attention also needs to be paid to the involvement of the local business community, and to ensuring that it has the capacity to play its role in influencing and addressing local service requirements.
- The inherent problem of sustainability of many rural services. Communities need to be facilitated to assess their service needs. Consideration should be given to supporting pilot community appraisal studies.

Partnership Working

- Partnership working is relatively common among public and voluntary sector organisations, particularly between those organisations with co-terminous boundaries. However, there are greater potential barriers to partnership working between the public/voluntary sector and the private sector. We also found very few examples of private sector sponsorship of local events or projects.

Innovative Approaches & Sharing Best Practice

- We found plentiful examples of innovative working, but relatively poor dissemination of best practice, particularly between organisations and geographic areas.

Multi-Purpose Buildings

- We found widespread support for community buildings, and the role they can play in enhancing service provision. However, issues remain regarding how these are funded and their long-term sustainability.

Childcare

- We were concerned at the lack of progress in addressing the provision and sustainability of childcare in rural areas.

2. Although we carried out our work 12 months after the report had been published, there were many developments – not least Community Planning – which were either just beginning, were in the pipeline or had still to bear fruit. We were

therefore only able to provide an interim assessment of the impact which the *Services in Rural Scotland* report has had in improving service provision for rural communities. We also felt that our work in itself helped to raise the profile of the report, and we would hope that this can be built upon. **We would therefore recommend that a further monitoring exercise is undertaken in, say, 2 years' time, to see what improvements have been made in rural service provision in that time.**

ANNEXES

**SCOTTISH NATIONAL RURAL PARTNERSHIP
SUB-GROUP ON MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
SERVICES IN RURAL SCOTLAND REPORT**

Membership

Helen Betts-Brown, Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations

Brendan Burns, Federation of Small Businesses

Chris Higgins, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (representing the Enterprise Networks)

Douglas Scott, Scottish Borders Council (representing CoSLA)

Remit

“to monitor and report back on progress being made by service providers in taking forward and implementing the main findings and recommendations of the *Services in Rural Scotland* Report.”

EVIDENCE

The Sub-Group took oral evidence from representatives of the following organisations:

Community Planning Task Force
Consignia
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Co-operative Bank plc.
Federation of Small Businesses
Halifax Bank of Scotland plc.
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Lloyds TSB
Royal Bank of Scotland plc
Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations
Scottish Enterprise
Scottish Grocers Federation

It also had discussions with officials from the Scottish Executive and its agencies covering the following policy areas:

- Communities Scotland
- Digital Inclusion
- Health
- Local Government and Community Planning
- Public Service Delivery Group
- Rural Policy
- Social Inclusion
- Transport
- 21st Century Government
- Voluntary Issues Unit
- Young People and Looked After Children

Written evidence was received from the following organisations:

Children in Scotland
Highland Pre-school Services
Inland Revenue
New Opportunities Fund
Sportscotland

ANNEX C
ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN SERVICES IN RURAL SCOTLAND

It should be noted that the responsibility for taking forward some (or elements of some) of the recommendations relate to organisations other than those highlighted in the recommendation text and this is reflected in the table below. Parentheses indicate that though lead responsibility may not lead with this organisation, the recommendation relates to them.

Key: SNRP: Scottish National Rural Partnership
 SCVO: Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations
 CPTF: Community Planning Task Force

SCVO: Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations
 CPTF: Community Planning Task Force

Recommendations	Scottish Exec.	All Public Agencies	Enterprise Networks	Local Authorities / CoSLA	Banks	Consignia	SNRP	SCVO/ Vol. Sector	CPTF	Trade Assocs.	Community Groups	Others (Inland Revenue, Children in Scotland and Community Transport Association)
Accessing Services												
R1.1 We support the recommendation in the Community Planning Green Paper that Local Authorities and other public agencies should use the Community Planning process to deliver services with others and make the best use of existing resources such as buildings, vehicles and staff.		●	●	●					(●)			
R1.2 We recommend that CoSLA should be invited to report to SNRP on how the Accounts Commission for Scotland's report into reconfiguration of services has been implemented.				●			(●)					
R1.3 The Executive should direct its agencies to participate in partnership working and set targets specific to service delivery in rural areas to encourage this, for example through the use of non-statutory Ministerial directions proposed in the Community Planning Green Paper.	●	●	●	●					(●)			
R1.4 The Executive should explore the most appropriate way of disseminating good practice in the use of community buildings, such as schools and village halls, to deliver a range of services in rural areas - both to inform service providers about the opportunities offered by community halls and to encourage communities to explore providing other services in their hall	●											

Recommendations	Scottish Exec.	All Public Agencies	Enterprise Networks	Local Authorities / CoSLA	Banks	Consignia	SNRP	SCVO/ Vol. Sector	CPTF	Trade Assocs.	Community Groups	Others (Inland Revenue, Children in Scotland and Community Transport Association)
that are not currently provided locally.												
R1.5 Public agencies should take the opportunity raised by the requirement to make buildings accessible to all by 2003, to design any new buildings or adaptations to existing buildings in partnership with the local community and the private sector, and with the flexibility to be used by different providers. Sustainable design, such as underfloor heating, should be used wherever practicable in order to reduce costs.	●	●	●	●								
R1.6 The Executive should target the LCGS to encourage and assist multi-purpose community halls in rural areas.	●											
R1.7 The Enterprise Network, working with CoSLA, Banks, The Post Office and the Executive, should investigate the possibility of setting up a pilot project to bring together a range of public, community and private sector providers to test the "Community mail" concept.	●	●	●	●	●	●			(●)			
R1.8 We encourage public agencies to investigate the possibility of using existing rural outlets or networks, such as the Post Office network, as a means of providing information and advice services at a local level.		●	●	●		(●)						
R1.9 Service providers should assess the potential to provide mobile or peripatetic specialist services, such as GP's, either on their own or jointly with others.	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●		
R1.10 The Executive should work with CoSLA and the Enterprise Network to share existing good practice on the use of web-based technology to provide access to services.	●		●	●								
R1.11 Public agencies using the Internet to deliver services should ensure that they have consulted communities on what they want and should monitor its use once set up.	●	●	●	●							(●)	
R1.12 The Inventory of community websites underway in the HIE region should be extended to the whole of rural Scotland.	(●)		(●)									
R1.13 There needs to be a systematic study of community demands for, and uses of, the Internet and other computer-based technologies. The issues of training and familiarisation with this technology should form part of this.	(●)											
R1.14 Service providers should maximise usage of existing networks and resources in rural communities, including the Horizon facilities offered by the Post Office network, to increase the range of services available to rural communities.	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●		

Recommendations	Scottish Exec.	All Public Agencies	Enterprise Networks	Local Authorities / CoSLA	Banks	Consignia	SNRP	SCVO/ Vol. Sector	CPTF	Trade Assocs.	Community Groups	Others (Inland Revenue, Children in Scotland and Community Transport Association)
R1.15 The Executive should commission research aimed at providing a better understanding of the relationship between access to services and travel patterns.	●											
R1.16 The Executive should carry out an audit of the way in which demand assessments for local transport are carried out.	●											
R1.17 We recommend early publication by the Executive of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Rural Transport Funding Package.	●											
R1.18 We welcome the forthcoming publication by the Executive of a rural community transport guide. We recommend that a conference be set up under the auspices of the Executive and the Community Transport Association to promote the guide and to examine a range of issues, including the transport needs of young people in rural areas.	●											Community Transport Association
Spreading Awareness												
R2.1 The Executive should publish an annual summary of the projects supported by the Rural Challenge Fund, including contact details for each group. We encourage all funders to do the same.	●											
R2.2 SNRP should include the examples of best practice we have gathered in a guide to best practice in rural service delivery.							●					
R2.3 SNRP should update its "Good Practice in Rural Development series", in collaboration with other bodies, particularly No.6: Developing Projects and Securing Funding.							●					
R2.4 The Executive should commission a fuller research project into international best practice, with particular reference to the transferability of projects to Scotland's remote and rural areas.	●											
R2.5 The Executive, together with SCVO, CoSLA and others, should commission a scoping study to investigate setting up a "rural community gateway" website. This will link community groups, provide a database of successful projects, and be a source of advice.	●			●				●				
R2.6 The Executive, CoSLA and SCVO should consider organising an annual conference on issues surrounding service delivery in rural areas.	●			●				●				
Community Issues												
R3.1 The Community Planning Task Force should investigate how Community Planning can									●			

Recommendations	Scottish Exec.	All Public Agencies	Enterprise Networks	Local Authorities / CoSLA	Banks	Consignia	SNRP	SCVO/ Vol. Sector	CPTF	Trade Assocs.	Community Groups	Others (Inland Revenue, Children in Scotland and Community Transport Association)
assist rural communities to link with public bodies, agencies and other service providers.												
R3.2 The Community Planning Task Force should issue guidance on ways of taking rural needs into account in developing service delivery policies at a local level.									●			
R3.3 We encourage communities to be actively involved in developing priorities for service development and delivery. Preference should be given to Rural Challenge Fund bids that address this issue, and Local Rural Partnership bids that contain active plans for consulting, engaging and empowering communities.	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
R3.4 We encourage public agencies to provide community groups with administrative support. All funders should recognise the provision of such administrative support for community groups at all stages in new and ongoing projects by public agencies as a legitimate form of support.	●	●	●	●								
R3.5 When public agencies are providing capital or revenue support to innovative pilot projects, they should evaluate them at an early stage before the support ends with a view to establishing whether the projects could be mainstreamed.	●	●	●	●								
R3.6 Public agencies should ensure interdepartmental dialogue as well as cross-body working to assist community initiatives.	●	●	●	●								
R3.7 The review of funding for the voluntary sector currently being undertaken by the Executive is best placed to examine the opportunities to develop single application forms and 3 year rolling programmes, with particular reference to the needs of groups in rural areas.	●											
R3.8 SCVO and the CVS Network should consider providing groups with advice on financial planning, including how they might access other funding sources or, more importantly, negotiate with public or other service providers to incorporate the project into the mainstream programmes.								●				
R3.9 Community groups should be more proactive in seeking to share resources.											●	
Service Delivery Standards												
R4.1 National bodies, including the Executive, must consider, as a matter of course, the impact of their standards on providers in rural areas. All funders should be prepared to adopt a pragmatic approach with regard to setting standards for projects in rural areas.	●	●	●	●								

Recommendations	Scottish Exec.	All Public Agencies	Enterprise Networks	Local Authorities / CoSLA	Banks	Consignia	SNRP	SCVO/ Vol. Sector	CPTF	Trade Assocs.	Community Groups	Others (Inland Revenue, Children in Scotland and Community Transport Association)
R4.2 Public agencies should encourage a variety of levels of service, allowing communities to provide them in remoter areas where this is the most cost-effective means of doing so.	●	●	●	●								
Key Services												
R5.1 Ministers should ask Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and local authorities to come forward with proposals within six months on how they will proactively support and advise small rural businesses, such as village shops, community-owned shops or petrol stations and post offices, as key service providers and employers in rural areas.	●		●	●								
R5.2 Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, together with CoSLA and the Trade Associations, should consider whether there is a need for a national structured system of business improvement grants for village shops and community-owned shops.			●	●						●		
R5.3 Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, together with CoSLA and the Trade Associations, should consider developing a training programme to help new entrants in particular, understand the economics of running a village store.			●	●						●		
R5.4 Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise should seek the view of all Trade Associations on the development of a national rural shop advisory service to both privately owned and community shops. This advisory service could co-ordinate advice and assistance, and gather experience from organisations already involved in community buy-outs and disseminate it. It could also assess the transferability to Scotland of the ViRSA scheme as a means of advising community shops and petrol stations.			●							●		
R5.5 Village shops need to explore ways of exploiting the growth in e-commerce, for example by becoming a collection and ordering point for goods bought by mail order, telephone or on-line.			●							●		
R5.6 The Executive and CoSLA should work together to investigate whether all local authorities could use their discretionary powers to extend the rates relief on shops with a rateable value of less than £6,000 in communities of fewer than 3,000 to 100%. The extension of the scheme to cover petrol stations fitting these criteria might also be considered.	●			●								
R5.7 Banks should assess how they can use existing facilities or other service providers in a community such as using the local post office to provide these services on an agency basis or locating banking facilities in community buildings, perhaps along the lines of the "community					●	(●)						

Recommendations	Scottish Exec.	All Public Agencies	Enterprise Networks	Local Authorities / CoSLA	Banks	Consignia	SNRP	SCVO/ Vol. Sector	CPTF	Trade Assocs.	Community Groups	Others (Inland Revenue, Children in Scotland and Community Transport Association)
mail", referred to at paragraph 16 above. We encourage Banks to look at the possibility of using this model to open new facilities in rural areas.												
R5.8 Rates relief for village stores/post offices should be extended to cover the recently introduced policy of rating ATM's sited away from bank premises.	●											
R5.9 The Post Office should look seriously at its standard procedures to ensure that there is sufficiently flexibility to enable post office services to continue to be available in all rural areas.						●						
R5.10 The Post Office should investigate by 2002 more imaginative and innovative ways of attracting new people into running rural post offices. One option worth considering might be a scheme similar to the Croft Entrants Scheme - which seeks to bring young people into crofting - could be applied at rural Post Offices.						●						
R5.11 There is potential for the Highland Wellbeing Alliance/Post Office/Barataria Foundation pilot projects to be extended across rural Scotland. The Executive, CoSLA, the Enterprise Network and the Post Office should see what can be done to facilitate this.	●		●	●		●						
R5.12 We have noted that considerable activity will take place around PIU pilots on GGP and ILAP in England in 2002. We think that this needs to be rolled out more rapidly in rural Scotland and recommend that the Executive and the Post Office, working with the UK Government, investigate setting up a pilot project in Scotland in advance of 2002.	●					●						
R5.13 The Executive and CoSLA should work together to investigate whether all local authorities could use their discretionary powers to extend the rates relief on post offices with a rateable value of less than £6,000 in communities of fewer than 3,000 to 100%.	●			●								
Village Halls												
R6.1 We recommend that the Executive and SCVO should commission research to review funders' existing requirements. This should be followed by a workshop to bring together the administrators of the Executive's LCGS, local authority administrators of the LCGS, SCVO administrators of the 21st Century Halls programme, and other funders, to examine how procedures and requirements, decision-making cycles and timescales could be streamlined and harmonised.	●							●				

Recommendations	Scottish Exec.	All Public Agencies	Enterprise Networks	Local Authorities / CoSLA	Banks	Consignia	SNRP	SCVO/ Vol. Sector	CPTF	Trade Assocs.	Community Groups	Others (Inland Revenue, Children in Scotland and Community Transport Association)
R6.2 In particular, a commonly agreed procedure for a single comprehensive checking of all relevant documents required by all funding partners should be agreed. This would result in the issuing of a 'Compliance Certificate', which would cover organisational structure, ownership of ground and buildings, planning permission and building warrants. The actual decision to fund would remain with each funder, but the process of application would be streamlined.	●	●	●	●				●				
R6.3 SCVO and the Executive should develop a detailed good practice guide drawing on the knowledge gained from the running of the 21st Century Halls Programme and the LCGS, documenting good practice case studies.	●							●				
Child-care												
R7.1 The Executive and Children in Scotland should encourage stronger links between the work of Childcare Partnerships and other social inclusion initiatives, such as Sure Start, SIPs and New Community Schools.	●			(●)								Children in Scotland
R7.2 Local Authorities should reassess their contracts with school transport providers when possible in order to provide transport for children from school to out of school care providers, where appropriate.				●								
R7.3 The Executive should commission research on good practice by employers in providing for childcare need.	●											
R7.4 Local Authorities and LECs should come forward with business proposals on how groups of small and medium sized companies can take advantage of existing childcare facilities.			●	●								
R7.5 The Executive and the Inland Revenue should monitor the take-up and usage of the childcare tax credit to provide factual evidence about whether the scheme is enabling more parents to use childcare in rural areas.	●											Inland Revenue
Young People												
R8.1 The Executive and SNRP should consider making "services for young people" a theme for a future round of the Rural Challenge Fund, and that such projects should demonstrate that they have actively engaged with young people in developing such services.	●						●					
R8.2 We recommend that the Executive consult SNRP about the criteria for the Rural Community Transport Fund to consider how projects addressing young people's needs, as well	●						(●)					

Recommendations	Scottish Exec.	All Public Agencies	Enterprise Networks	Local Authorities / CoSLA	Banks	Consignia	SNRP	SCVO/ Vol. Sector	CPTF	Trade Assocs.	Community Groups	Others (Inland Revenue, Children in Scotland and Community Transport Association)
as those of rural communities more generally, might be encouraged in future.												
R8.3 The Community Planning Task Force should investigate how service providers can engage with young people and involve them in the ongoing process of assessing and meeting their needs through the Community Planning process.									●			
R8.4 Public agencies should be aware of the need to engage young people actively in their planning processes, perhaps through initiatives such as the Scottish Youth Parliament, and share good practice.		●	●	●								
R8.5 The Executive should mount pilot projects aimed at promoting a constructive dialogue between service providers and young people in rural Scotland.	●											

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