

Rural Strategy 2004 Fact Sheet:

Local Delivery Pathfinder 'Joint Venture'

What are we talking about?

- We will be looking at identifying and building on the best mechanisms to devolve delivery as close as possible to rural communities.
- To that end, we propose to investigate the scope for innovative joint ventures and ways of working at sub-regional and local level, by carrying out a number of pathfinders during 2004/05 to test new ways of rural delivery.

Why carry out pathfinders?

- Local government is democratically accountable for delivering high quality services to rural communities. Local authorities play a crucial role in community leadership, in planning and delivering services for rural areas.
- Closeness to their communities and people gives local delivery organisations a better understanding of what will make a difference.
- Local government and other partners at local level – the voluntary and community sector, social enterprises, Rural Community Councils – have the skills and knowledge to better target local needs.
- Local delivery needs to be driven locally, with best practice mainstreamed and innovation in delivery developed and owned locally to maximise impact.

What will happen?

- In each English region (excluding London), a sub-regional pathfinder will be set up to explore and test opportunities for more joined up, flexible and effective approaches to rural delivery at a local level. These will:
 - *Ensure greater co-ordination* of a range of rural delivery activities (e.g. economic development, service delivery, access or a mix of these) at the local level. Where possible, they will be linked to relevant second generation Local PSA targets, and will be used to help translate Local Strategic Partnership priorities into deliverable actions;
 - *Test practical options* for revised local delivery mechanisms which might lead to different local arrangements, and/or identify practical solutions to 'blockages' that need to be removed or gaps to be filled.
- Each Government Office will, this summer, bring forward one proposal for the sub-regional pathfinder to be undertaken in their region, focusing on better delivery of Defra's rural policy objectives. As a 'family' these pathfinders will address a range of issues in a variety of contexts – they will provide good practice proposals that may be applicable more generally across the country, wherever they fit the local circumstances.

What will be better?

- Better targeting of services and resources, because decisions will be taken closer to the point of need.
- Joint working at local level, and agreeing on clear roles – including what organisation will lead for what ('lead local delivery agent') – will reduce the time spent on talking and increase the time available for 'doing'.
- Closer working relationships between partners with responsibilities for social, environmental and economic decision making will provide complementary and mutually reinforcing sustainable solutions.

How and when?

The changes will be phased as follows:

2004/05: Sub-regional pathfinders set up, with an initial phase of analysis, prioritisation and co-ordination.

2005/06: Implementation of solutions in pathfinder areas, with evaluation.

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