



## Policy Position Papers

As part of our vision, ACRE has produced a series of Policy Position Papers looking at how the Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) can help shape rural communities in the future, the key challenges they face, and how RCAN provide solutions to those issues. We have published fourteen Policy Position Papers since 2009 on the wide range of topics set on the pages below. The most recent publication sets out our vision for the implementation of the Big Society in rural areas.



ACRE's Policy Position Papers highlight the strengths of rural communities and our network's approach to supporting communities to find solutions to some of the problems they face.

The Papers present the context and background of issues facing [RCAN](#) and rural communities, but in addition provide details of case studies of communities taking action for themselves, demonstrating innovation and resilience.

The Papers have been received very positively from those looking for more detailed information about the issues facing rural communities.

### [Children and Young People](#)

ACRE believes that children and young people should have the opportunity to have equitable access to both age specific and wider services in ways that meets their own needs and those of their families and carers.

### [Climate Change](#)

Rural communities have greater potential than most to take action to address the impacts of climate change. They can develop innovative approaches to both change individual behaviour and promote sustainable lifestyles through collective action.

### [Community Led Planning](#)

Community Led Planning (CLP) enables local people to create stronger, more vibrant and more resilient communities, better able to respond to local challenges and opportunities. It represents genuine value for money, as communities across the country take on responsibility for making things happen, rather than waiting for others to do it for them.

### [Digital Inclusion](#)

ACRE would like rural communities to benefit from equitable access to excellent digital services. It is important that the current bias towards urban areas is narrowed and eliminated quickly, so that rural areas can experience the wide range of benefits that services via digital bring to people and business. Support should be made available to those communities who wish to develop their own cost effective broadband solutions.

### [Healthcare](#)

ACRE believes that to improve health outcomes people need and deserve high quality healthcare services appropriate to their needs. Rural solutions to healthcare delivery should be developed to suit the rural context making full use of local facilities, outreach delivery and improved transport.

### [Housing](#)

ACRE wants to see thriving communities supported to develop in

sustainable ways. A key factor in this is the provision of a suitable mix of affordable housing to enable local people to stay in their community. It is our vision that this will help support local services and facilities and ensure better quality of life for all.

### [Implementing the Big Society](#)

ACRE's policy position paper considers rural implementation of the Big Society initiatives and how, if implemented appropriately, they could open up significant opportunities for communities to secure a more sustainable future. The risks inherent in decentralising the planning system, the Right to Build, Buy and Bid, as well as the Community Organisers scheme, are outlined alongside ways of ensuring implementation delivers best value in the outcomes that communities can achieve through these measures.

### [Older People](#)

Older people are the backbone of rural communities through the contribution they make to the sustainability of local community life. ACRE believes that it is essential that older people have access to appropriate services and support to enable them to stay and remain active within their community.

### [Rural Challenges](#)

Local people in rural communities must be re-introduced to real local democracy. Given the opportunity to shape and take decisions, they will be far more sensitive to the value and potential for change and more willing to contribute their own efforts to making it happen.

### [Rural Community Buildings](#)

Rural communities benefit from owning well-maintained, multi-purpose facilities that provide opportunities for local social activity, sports, arts and recreation, alongside providing access to services and civic participation. A key factor is the provision of well resourced advice, information and support that ensures volunteer management committees succeed in helping their rural communities to be vibrant, healthy and sustainable.

### [Services](#)

Rural communities should be empowered to influence and even deliver rural services so that rural people have access to a range of fundamental services tailored to their needs. Re-localising services means less travel, reduced costs to local people who are in most need of the services and, in the longer term, delivers the potential to generate more sustainable rural communities.

### [Social Inclusion](#)

The causes of social exclusion are many and complex and one solution does not fit all. ACRE would like to see a range of targeted person-centred solutions to empower individuals and communities. It is essential that policy is 'rural proofed' and information is available nationally to identify where social exclusion is dispersed, as is the case in rural areas and that resources are allocated fairly based on need.

### [Sustainable Communities](#)

Sustainable rural communities require local planning that is responsive to their needs, active community involvement and a system that encourages new business opportunities. This should include the development of new affordable housing along with accessible good quality services, such as transport, education, health, social support and financial access.

### [Transport](#)

Rural communities need affordable transport solutions that deliver services to places and at times communities need. These solutions are best when they are developed by the community, often in partnership with a range of providers.

## Quick links

- [Children and Young People \(2751kb\)](#)
- [Climate Change \(2105kb\)](#)
- [Community Led Planning \(647kb\)](#)
- [Digital Inclusion \(2173kb\)](#)
- [Healthcare \(2476kb\)](#)
- [Housing \(608kb\)](#)
- [Implementing The Big Society \(2711kb\)](#)
- [Older People \(2724kb\)](#)
- [Rural Challenges \(2548kb\)](#)
- [Rural Community Buildings \(1207kb\)](#)

- [Services \(173kb\)](#)
  - [Social Inclusion \(2527kb\)](#)
  - [Sustainable Communities \(2511kb\)](#)
  - [Transport \(3042kb\)](#)
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