



The Rural Services Network

National Rural Conference 2024

Delivering for Rural – Unlocking rural prosperity

Monday 16th September

Rural Economy & Regeneration Session



Rural Economy & Regeneration

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

Delivering for Rural

Unlocking Rural Prosperity

RURAL PLANNING

RURAL ECONOMIES

RURAL TRANSPORT

RURAL CONNECTIVITY

RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING

FAIR FUNDING

RURAL NET ZERO

RURAL HEALTH & CARE

The infographic features a central dark green circle containing the text 'Delivering for Rural' and 'Unlocking Rural Prosperity'. Surrounding this are several smaller circles, each with an image and a label: 'RURAL PLANNING' (elderly woman), 'RURAL ECONOMIES' (bus on road), 'RURAL TRANSPORT' (hand holding smartphone), 'RURAL CONNECTIVITY' (aerial view of village), 'RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING' (house), 'FAIR FUNDING' (map of UK), 'RURAL NET ZERO' (wind turbines and solar panels), and 'RURAL HEALTH & CARE' (man in workshop). A map of the UK is also present in the bottom right.

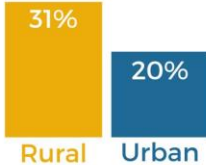
Rural Economy & Regeneration

Small businesses are especially important in rural economies.

% of people employed on SME businesses 2021/2022



% of people employed in micro-businesses 2021/2022



Source: Statistical Digest of Rural England, 2021/22

Productivity and Gross Value Added (GVA) in rural areas is lower than in urban areas.

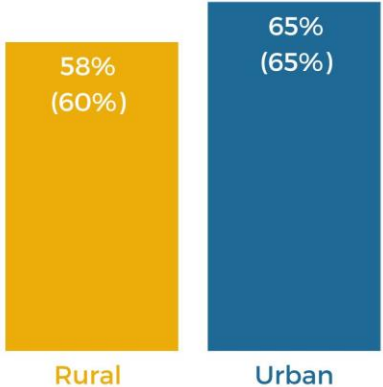


*excluding London

The GVA per workforce job as a percentage of the level for England.

Source: Statistical Digest of Rural England, 2022

The proportion of the population in rural areas that is working age (16 -64) has **decreased**.



Source: RSN analysis of mid year population estimates, 2023 (2013)

Rural voters earn **£1,600** less a year.



*excluding London

Source: RSN analysis of ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, July 2024

Rural Economy & Regeneration

Everyone should be able to access employment and have the opportunity to improve their lives

Challenges for the Workforce	Challenges for the employers / businesses
Lack of affordable housing options	Lack of broadband / mobile signal for businesses to increase productivity/markets
Lack of Public Transport to access skills/training/education/employment	Suitably qualified workforce
Lack of Broadband / mobile connectivity to access skills/training/education	Lack of Infrastructure
Seasonal nature of tourist industry	Difficulty accessing business support and advice

Rural Challenges

Rural Economy & Regeneration

First 18 months

Deliver a support programme for SMEs and community entrepreneurs in rural areas, especially start-ups and those seeking to grow.

Protect rural communities by ensuring that the metrics used to devise strategies or programmes for growth (including skills) are not based on 'one-size-fits-all' thinking but reflect the disadvantage in rural economies within regions.

Ensure policy and strategy is Rural Proofed in a way that is meaningful and demonstrable and also includes outcome monitoring. There is now a real case for placing Rural Proofing on a stronger legal footing, in the way that it has been in Northern Ireland.

First 3 years

Address the recommendations of the APPG for Rural Business and the Rural Powerhouse 2022 Report

Develop diversification programmes to tackle the structural weaknesses of some rural economies which are over reliant on certain sectors such as the visitor economy. Provide opportunities for the growth of the green economy and supporting infrastructure, namely the national grid and digital and mobile connectivity.

Create a system where decision making and resources are devolved to local areas as far as possible, creating the flexibility for tailored solutions to prioritise and meet local needs and opportunities.

Rural Solutions