



# The Rural Services Network

# **National Rural Conference 2024**

Delivering for Rural – Unlocking rural prosperity

Wednesday 18th September

**Rural Net Zero Session**





# Rural Net Zero

The rural fuel poverty gap is nearly **double** the national average.



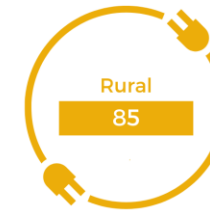
Source: Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Fuel Poverty Supplementary Tables 2023



In 2023 there were 10 times **fewer** electric buses/coaches in rural areas per head of population than in urban areas.

Source: RSN analysis of Western Power Distribution, 2023

In July 2024 the number of public charging devices available per 100,000 population:



⚡ Rural areas have nearly **20% fewer** public charging devices as a proportion of resident population than urban areas. ⚡

Source: RSN analysis of DfT Electric Vehicle Public Charging Infrastructure Statistics, July 2024

Rural households emissions are higher than urban households.



Source: Rural Net Zero, The role of Rural Local Authorities in reaching Net Zero Researched and produced by Quantum Strategy & Technology Ltd for UK100's Countryside Climate Network 2021/22



**25%** of rural homes are not connected to the gas network



## The Rural Reality

# Rural Net Zero

**All areas of the country should be able to contribute to, and receive the benefits from net zero**

While rural communities can benefit from emerging green sectors and energy production, they face challenges, particularly in energy infrastructure, which must be addressed to meet the increased demands from electric vehicles and heat pumps.

The expansion of onshore wind and solar farms in these areas must ensure tangible local benefits to prevent resistance.

Furthermore, addressing the unique energy needs of rural properties, especially those off the mains gas grid, is crucial for a fair transition.

# Rural Net Zero

## First 18 months

Deliver a 'fabric first' Energy Strategy which address rural needs. This means, ensuring rural is ready to embrace the move to a technology neutral approach to Net Zero so that individuals can choose the most appropriate solutions. Government should focus on funding and capability support to achieve low carbon homes including an emphasis on skills to support the roll out of schemes in rural areas..

Protect rural communities and businesses by not increasing duty or taxes on vehicle fuel cost. Such duties/taxes disproportionately hit rural residents, business, and service providers until comprehensive electric roll out is implemented.

Ensure that all economic growth programmes include explicit objectives to support low carbon and Net Zero growth. Specialist advice and related grant funding should be made available for existing rural businesses to help them reduce their carbon footprint and the UK meet its 2050 targets.

## First 3 years

Address the gaps in the network of public charging points across rural Britain. As many rural areas are tourist hotspots, increasing this network will boost the economy in rural areas.

Develop rural communities which are self-sufficient by decentralising energy networks in rural areas. By building networks that are based on local renewable production, rural communities could retain money within their local economies and support local jobs. .

Create a Net Zero Rural Britain by working with the energy industry to ensure that the electricity distribution network is resilient, reliable and fit-for-purpose across all rural Britain before additional demands are put upon it.

# Rural Solutions