



RURAL PROOFING

*Where are we
now?*

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Rural proofing is a process of reviewing policies through a rural lens, to make these policies fit for purpose for those living and working in rural communities

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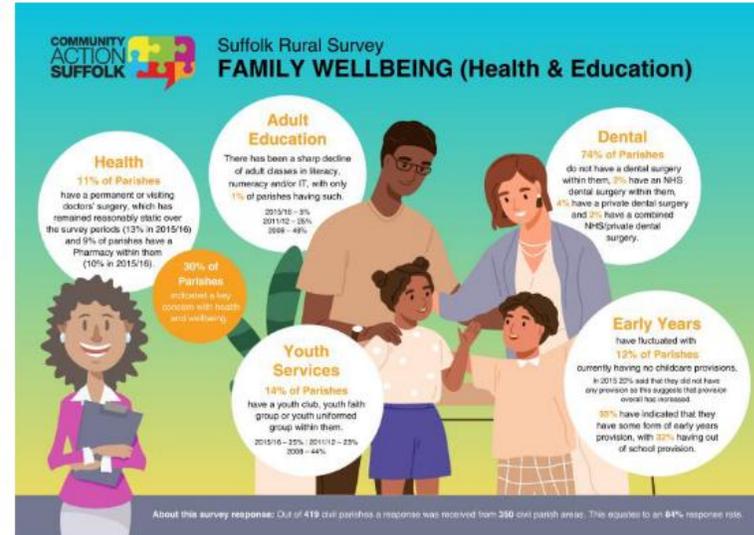
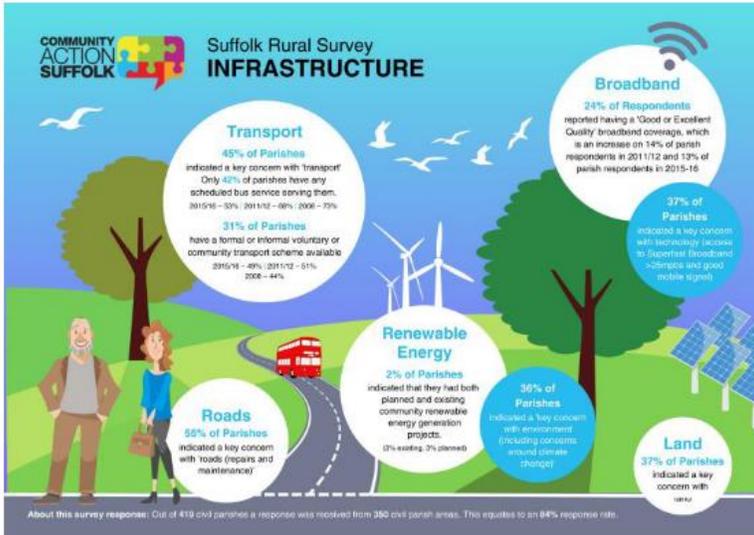


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CAS RURAL SERVICES SURVEY 2022



Key areas of concern: Communications Technology and Broadband; Strengthening Communities and Community Life; Environment (including concerns around climate change); Health and Wellbeing; Economy; Community Cohesion, Local Welfare Support and Cost of Living

Full report & data set here: [Research into Suffolk and the VCFSE Sector - Community Action Suffolk](https://www.researchintosuffolkandvcfse.org.uk/)

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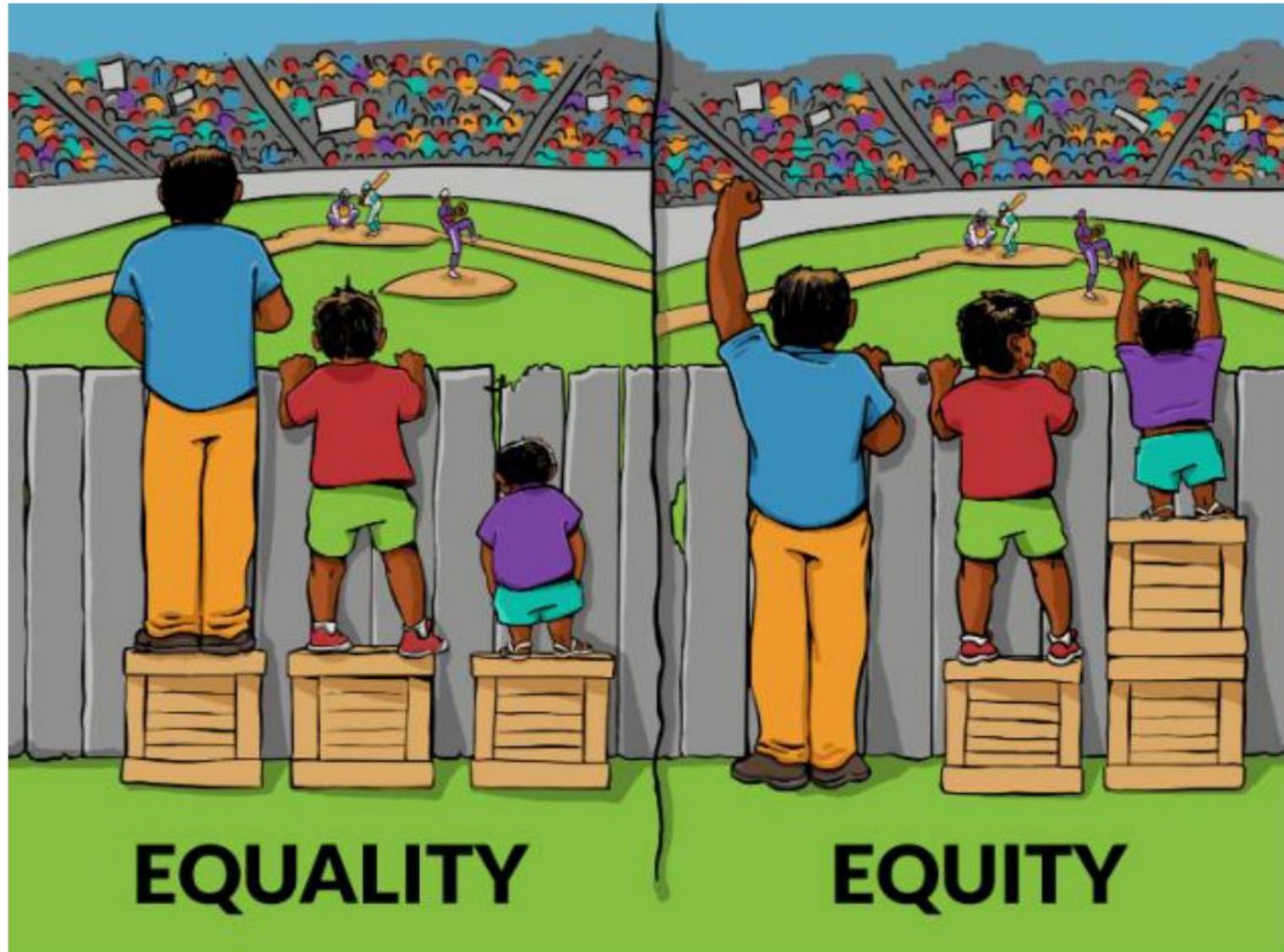
Why should Community Partnerships use a rural proofing approach?

All decisions made by the Community Partnership will have an impact on rural areas as all Community Partnerships have rural areas. It is important that these decisions impact fairly on rural areas taking into consideration the challenges they face and their unique assets. Rural proofing helps to

- enable the achievement of the Community Partnership's stated priorities through delivery of impactful projects;
- understand the scale of that direct and indirect impact and what actions need to be taken for the best outcome for rural areas;
- contribute to local growth by achieving good economic, environmental and social solutions;
- demonstrate understanding of the area, encourage collaboration and commitment to equity for all;
- provide a framework to work with which supports opportunities to discuss, reflect and evidence whether the Community Partnership's priorities and subsequent projects are equally accessible to all
- influence the development of stronger projects/services to ensure equity.

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The crates represent the tools we have to support our rural communities – to understand what those tools are/could be, we should be questioning every aspect of our processes...

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Rural Proofing Projects & Services

Project Initiation

- Will this be available to rural areas?
- Have rural areas contributed to the project ideas? How?
- Is there support from rural areas? What evidence is there of this?
- What direct and indirect impact will this have on rural areas? Is this fair?
- Which rural assets can be utilised?
- What will the impact be on rural areas compared with urban areas?
- Are there opportunities for collaborative working?

Planning

- Are there any barriers for rural areas to access this project/service? E.g. access/infrastructure
- How will this be communicated effectively?
- What adjustments (if any) can be made to ensure equity for rural areas? Are there budget implications? Is the project still viable?
- How will this be monitored?

Project Close Down or Transfer

(through reflection & evaluation)

- What worked well for rural areas?
- How many from rural areas accessed the project/service?
- What is the impact? What evidence is there?
- What learning can be taken forward to other projects/services for rural areas?
- What could be amended to improve the delivery and impact in rural areas? Are there budget implications?

Delivery

(through monitoring & evaluation)

- What is working well for rural areas?
- What is delivery like on the ground in rural areas compared to urban areas?
- How many are accessing this from rural areas compared to rural areas?
- Is the project/service effective? What is the impact?
- What could be amended to improve the delivery and impact in rural areas?



Table Discussion:

- Are the Board and 8 Community Partnerships **actively** Rural Proofing?
- What more could you do?
- Can you share any good practice examples?

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Summary recommendations in July 2022 (taken from final report)

The Community Partnership Board and Community Partnerships are recommended to review progress against the recommendations on pages 3 and 4 of the toolkit that relate to:

- Rural representation
- Rural champions
- Review of Community Partnership priorities in light of 'rural' considerations
- Monitoring of rural allocation of its Small Grants Scheme and measures to address any shortfall in rural – particularly with regard to communication and participation from rural areas and need/potential for ring fencing of % of grant pot

How rural proofing can be embedded across the Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships (CP) should discuss the following suggestions and apply those which will help adopt a rural proofing approach.

Terms of Reference

The East Suffolk Community Partnerships and the Community Partnership Board have their own Terms of Reference that set out the rules of each partnership. These should be reviewed and perhaps updated to include a commitment to rural proofing. The following examples could be included:

- **Section 1.2 "At least one core member to be a rural champion"**
- **Section 2.0 "Consider how CP decisions impact on rural areas"**
- **Section 3.1 "Ensure all decisions have given due consideration to the direct and indirect impact on rural areas."**

Rural Representation

Each Community Partnership should review membership and attendance around the table to ensure that there is proportionate representation there for rural areas and rural communities. A CP area with a high proportion of rural area and/or population should have this reflected in its membership.

- **Does the CP know the proportion of rural/non rural residents and geographical area?**
- **Does the CP membership reflect this including all 'hats' individuals wear?**
- **Are multiple hats of members identified explicitly? e.g. A Parish Council AND a youth group**
- **Does the CP need to identify and recruit rural representation?**
- **What can the CP do to stimulate engagement with rural areas?**

Rural Champions

The role of the rural champions as part of the core partnership could be:

- To explain and help the partnerships to understand what rural proofing is;
- To remind partnership members to consider any implications on rural communities and equal accessibility;
- To question what can be done to ensure positive implications affecting rural areas;
- To ensure that any project/service developments address rural considerations throughout the decision-making processes.
- **Who are the rural champions for the CP?**
- **Does the CP need to identify and recruit this rural champion?**
- **Do they understand the role?**
- **Do they need to meet separately as a sub-group?**

Community Partnership Priorities

The priorities should be reflective of the development needed across the whole CP for both rural and non-rural areas. There should be clear evidence to support this, subject to appropriate and regular review.

- **Do the priorities need reviewing?**
- **Do the priorities reflect the needs of rural areas?**

Budget Allocation

Consideration should be given to reviewing budget allocations to ensure that they reflect the rural/urban split of that CP, and that rural needs are being addressed. It may be necessary to consider ringfencing an appropriate proportion of the CP's budget to ensure fair allocation of monies.

- **What proportion of funding has been allocated and spent so far on rural areas and residents?**
- **How does this compare to non-rural areas?**
- **How does this compare to the rural/non-rural population and/or geographical split?**
- **What can the CP do to stimulate engagement and project ideas from rural areas?**

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Suggested next steps:

- Review individual area toolkits
- Identify and commit to 2 or 3 actions to further embed rural proofing
- Share good practice examples across Community Partnerships
- Annual review

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