
OUR COUNTRYSIDE: THE FUTURE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a first introduction to the contents of the rural white paper published by the Government in November 2000. A copy of the white paper has been placed in the Members' Room.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In November 2000, the Government finally published their long awaited rural white paper entitled 'Our Countryside: the future. The launch coincides with the publication of a parallel white paper on urban renaissance.
- 2.2 The white paper deals in great detail with the future well being of the countryside and includes a multitude of cross cutting measures intended to 'make a difference' for those living and working in, and those using, the countryside.

3 REVIEW OF KEY POINTS

- 3.1 The Government's vision is:
- a living countryside with thriving communities and access to high quality public services;
 - a working countryside with a diverse economy giving high and stable levels of employment;
 - a protected countryside in which the environment is sustained and enhanced, and which all can enjoy;
 - a vibrant countryside which can shape its own future and with its voice heard by Government at all levels.
- 3.2 The key aim is to sustain and enhance the distinctive environment, economy and social fabric of the English countryside for the benefit of all.
- 3.3 The key elements of the white paper are summarised in appendix 1 attached to this report.

4 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is too early to get a true feel of the implications of the white paper for Rochford. Certainly, there are significant elements of the document which will inform the process of the preparation of the next Local Plan. However, the breadth of the proposals and their implications for local authority service delivery goes well beyond land-use planning policies.

There is no doubt that emerging community plans, revised crime and disorder strategies and so on will need to take close account of the contents of the white paper.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 At this stage, it is not possible to be clear about the resource implications for the authority. The Government has indicated that funds will be available to enable the implementation of some of the initiatives.

6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Government intends that Parish Councils will play a greater role in working with the Principal Authorities on delivery of services.

7 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Sub Committee **RECOMMENDS**

That the summary of the white paper 'Our Countryside: the future' be noted and that further reports be brought to appropriate Committees as the individual elements of the proposals outlined in the document are developed by the Government.(HPS)

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