



The need for an “Universal Rural Service Obligation”

1. Context

1.1 CPRW believes there is no moral or practical reason why those living in rural areas and /or managing rural landscapes for the benefit of their urban counterparts, should be disadvantaged or denied access to the same basic range and standard of every day services which all people rely on.

1.2 We therefore contend that the Welsh Assembly Government, public service deliverers and Local Authorities should recognise those living in sparsely populated rural areas as a legitimate “equality group”

2. CPRW therefore advocates that your Party

2.1 Ensures that those responsible for the provision of rural services, work collective to ensure that the following minimum requirements are available to anyone living in the sparsely populated rural areas of Wales

- Access to a reliable infrastructure of utilities including water, electricity (off grid where necessary), telephone and broadband services.
- Access to affordable housing and healthy local food.
- Access to a community meeting place.
- Access to primary level education in close proximity to their place of residence.
- Access to benefits for all those who are eligible.
- Access to general health care at all stages of their lives.
- Access to rural energy grants to enable homes which are energy substandard to be made more energy efficient¹
- Access to special funds to enable needy rural householders to overcome the financial hardship of fuel poverty².
- Improved accessibility through the provision of a range of safe, reliable and affordable community scale transport services.
- Access to an appropriate range of emergency services including police, fire and air ambulances to ensure adequate security and public safety in rural communities:

2.1 We believe that across the plethora of public service provision, the relevant funding formulae have not properly recognised the cost of providing services of this kind in rural areas.

¹ Funding for these measures would be achieved through a reorientation of the existing subsidies which promote inefficient industrial scale renewable energy schemes.

² As above



This results in rural communities paying more, getting less and most importantly having to use more of their net disposable incomes to access services; incomes which are considerably lower than in urban areas.

2.2 CPRW believes this disparity is both an issue of short term equality and the long term sustainability of rural communities which simply must be addressed irrespective of the present financial climate.

