

SRA AGM/Conference 20 September 2017 – Speaker Discussion Panel

1. What are the most important considerations for policy development?
 - Examples of best practice from beyond the UK
 - Don't think in a vacuum
 - Think about where do we want to be?
2. How do we encompass the diversity of Scotland in our vision?
 - We need a vision that everyone can but into e.g. 3 islands identified key drivers and outcomes. Unifying but delivered through mixed methods.
3. How has Ireland anticipated Brexit?
 - No idea!
 - Example of Ireland initiative – they bought the ferry and residents had two homes without council tax. They have been conscious of the need to plan.
4. Why is there a lack of Government function in schools?
 - Schools are nervous of politics. Politics is misrepresented as being activist/controversial so we need a different perception.
5. How do other countries develop and deliver a rural vision?
 - Other countries example, anyone earning under £35000 do not pay tax to the central government
 - Where local councils have the budget then turnout for voting is 98%
 - Question raised to Lesley Riddoch 'Don't you trust yourselves?'
 - Different definitions of rural
 - Vision of making 'rural' stronger
 - Rural Proofing – how legislation impacts on rural areas and makes out that 'rural' has needs which is disempowering for rural
 - Need to ensure Scottish Water can provide for a growing rural population
6. How do you define rural?
 - Seen as needing protections
 - The need to foster rural communities
 - Shift from rural-urban to urban-rural
7. How can electric cars contribute to climate change and transport issues?
 - The cost of private transport means there is a need for electric cars
 - Lack of public transport
 - Challenges of accessing transport for those experiencing a disability
 - If the rural premium is reduced = reduced isolation and would break the cycle of reduced mobility
8. European Rural Parliament – looking at other countries – we just need to do it!
9. How can we all help to create the vision practically?
 - Assess what we are doing and map that on to delivery pathway? Indicators?
 - Create evidence
 - Tackle the size of councils from bottom up and top down
10. Can we make development Trusts more accountable?
 - Constitution or better ballot turn out

- taxes still going to large councils
 - communities demand tax percentage
 - Development Trusts could work well with smaller councils
11. Next stages – look at shorty term steps e.g. ‘here is what could happen’ – open to ideas but not firmed up.
 - Degree of dysfunctionality on regional councils. SG needs to change thinking.
 12. How can we get SG to give us money locally?
 - Why should you need more?
 - Not enough money in the Land Fund for all the buyouts
 13. How can we cross all the laws (EU, SG) to create grassroots local democracy?
 14. What can we do to encourage councils to adopt suggestions from other countries?
 - E.g. Moray Leader – Great chance to build evidence base of how rural development can be done and implemented.
 - Projects and systems – systems that work well are invisible because they work well
 - Each step in a community helps to create and build a momentum