

Staffordshire Rural Declaration

Our Commitment

Staffordshire is a rural county. A quarter of its people live in rural areas. It has a huge impact on the wider region and has much to offer both urban and rural people. We want to make sure Staffordshire's rural areas reach their full potential by adopting a joined-up, pro-active approach, which empowers communities and delivers better outcomes in rural areas.

We believe:

- Rural areas are one of Staffordshire's greatest assets, offering fantastic environmental, economic and social benefits. Everyone, no matter where they live, should have the chance to enjoy and value these benefits
- Rural people, communities and businesses should be listened to and not feel overlooked because of their location. They should be fairly treated in all policies, programmes and spending decisions, with quality services being delivered to help them meet their needs and reach their full potential
- Rural people and businesses should be supported and empowered to create a level playing field, especially where the challenges they face are caused or increased by living or working in a rural location

The signing of this Declaration demonstrates our commitment to work individually and collectively to make this vision a reality.

We will:

- Maximise and promote the contribution that rural areas make towards Staffordshire's environmental, social and economic well-being
- Ensure the needs and interests of rural areas are heard in the development and implementation of policies and programmes
- Support people, communities and businesses that are disproportionately affected by the challenges of living and working in rural areas

We will do this by:

- Listening to the needs and aspirations of rural communities
- Sharing with rural communities what we want to achieve whilst being realistic about what is achievable
- Valuing the benefits, products and services provided by rural areas and how they contribute to economic prosperity, health and well-being
- Understanding why some people choose not to live, visit or invest in rural areas. We want to learn from this and address these reasons – to give everyone the chance to enjoy the benefits of rural areas
- Recognising the variety across our rural areas and that a one-size-fits-all approach is not always suitable
- Thinking about rural communities when we make decisions to ensure their fair and equitable treatment
- Identifying and embedding best practice in our own organisations, raising awareness of the good work already happening in rural areas
- Working together in a co-ordinated manner to achieve more than we can on our own

We will not:

- Duplicate effort by working on issues that are best dealt with by others
- Assume that other organisations are dealing with particular issues
- Create barriers that prevent others from improving quality of life in rural areas
- Focus our efforts on issues that are not deemed important by rural communities



Signed...

The Canal and River Trust
 Cannock Chase AONB
 (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
 Cannock Chase District Council
 Central Rivers Initiative
 CLA (Country Land & Business Association)
 Community Council of Staffordshire
 CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England)
 Diocese of Lichfield
 Dunston Business Village
 East Staffordshire Borough Council
 English Heritage
 Forest of Mercia
 Forestry Commission
 Growing Rural Enterprise
 Housing Plus
 Jobcentre Plus
 Leek and Buxton Colleges
 Lichfield District Council
 NFU (National Farmers Union)
 National Forest
 Natural England

North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce
 Peak District National Park Authority
 RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)
 The Rural Enterprise Academy
 SCIO (Staffordshire Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations)
 Stafford and Rural Homes
 Stafford Borough Council
 Staffordshire Rural Hub
 Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
 South Staffordshire College
 South Staffordshire Council
 Staffordshire County Council
 Staffordshire County Showground
 Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
 Staffordshire Parish Councils Association
 Staffordshire Police
 Staffordshire University
 Staffordshire Young Farmers
 Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP
 Tamworth Borough Council
 WiRE (Women in Rural Enterprise)