

Consultation on a proposal to use a Legislative Reform Order for making it easier to set up a town and parish council – March 2014

Response to DCLG consultation from Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Action with Communities in Rural England is the national umbrella body for the 38 Rural Community Councils who make up the ACRE Network and work at a local level in support of rural communities across the country.
- 1.2** Our vision - to be the voice of rural communities - is supported by the wealth of evidence and intelligence on rural matters that we collect from our members. We use this evidence to influence national policy on rural issues, from housing, health and transport to broadband, fuel poverty, services and community buildings.
- 1.3** We have a strong track record of speaking up for rural communities on the national stage.
- 1.4** Our rural community councils - some of whom date back 90 years - have a long and fruitful history of making a difference at grassroots level. ACRE was formed in 1987 to bring them together under one umbrella and we harness the strength of their experience to support our national work.
- 1.5** Examples of the work of the ACRE Network can be found in [***Making a Difference in rural communities throughout England***](#) - published jointly by ACRE and Defra in the autumn of 2013.

Do you agree that these proposals satisfy the conditions of the legislative reform order?

ACRE believes there will be very little direct impact on rural areas because almost all rural areas are already parished. However, rural areas do have an interest in this initiative. At a local authority level, local councils are more likely to be factored in to local authority policies and programmes where there is widespread parishing. Conversely, in those local authorities who have few parishes, there is an inclination to ignore or marginalise the local councils.

ACRE therefore believes that local councils in rural areas are likely to benefit if there are also local councils in the nearby towns and cities, within the same local authority area.

ACRE would welcome the opportunity to be more involved in the development of policy in relation to Town and Parish Councils.

Further information

Deborah Clarke [**d.clarke@acre.org.uk**](mailto:d.clarke@acre.org.uk) or **Paul Dixon** [**p.dixon@acre.org.uk**](mailto:p.dixon@acre.org.uk)