



East  
Northamptonshire  
Council

**Rupert Reichhold**  
**Councillor for Oundle Ward**

Home Address:  
2 Warren Bridge, OUNDLE, Peterborough PE8 4DQ  
Tel 01832 774315

Date 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2014.

James McLaughlin,  
Democratic Services Manager,  
East Northamptonshire Council



Dear Mr McLaughlin,

**MEETING OF COUNCIL ON 26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY: OUTSIDE BODIES  
COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT**

This letter with the attachments comprise my report to our Council on the Outside Bodies at which I represent the Council and I would be grateful if you would arrange for its inclusion on the Agenda for the Council's Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.

2. These organisations are SPARSE; Volunteer Action; CHAT Youth Counselling; and Supporting People.

**Supporting People**

3. The Supporting People Cross-Authority Members Group no longer meet. The work is the provision of supported housing for categories of vulnerable people. Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) Adult Social Services, who lead on this work, are, in implementing Government policy and NCC's own Prevention & Demand Strategy, changing the emphasis of the work to concentrate, as far as practical, on helping individuals and families avoid crises which could lead to their needing more specialist services.

4. Given the sensitivity of this work I consider that I should continue to keep it in view, maintaining contacts, where appropriate and reporting to the Council. Mr Reed keeps me informed on Housing implications and Mr Deacon maintains liaison with NCC etc officers concerned.

**LGA Rural Commission**

5. The LGA very recently decided to disband the Rural Commission and are devising arrangements for its work to be done by other elements of the LGA as a whole. LGA hq will be providing me with briefing and I propose, in the light of that, to discuss with the Leader whether or not I should represent ENC at any of the successor bodies.

**SPARSE**



6. The disbandment of the Rural Commission gives added value to the work of the SPARSE Group in representing the interests of councils like ENC.

7. Attached to the proforma for SPARSE are the letters dated 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 and 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2013 in which I reported to the Leader, on meetings of the SPARSE Group I had attended and the work of the Group.

8. The SPARSE Group, last year, concerted the Rural Fair Shares Petition, formally presented in the House of Commons to the Government, asking the Government to adjust the inequity in the Revenue Support Grant formula which results in Councils in urban areas receiving 50% more support per head of population than councils in rural areas. Colleagues here at ENC signed the Petition. My letter of 21<sup>st</sup> November states the evidence that the Petition has made some impression on Ministers. I watched the video film of the lively debate in the House.

9. Ministers agreed to receive a deputation, which include SPARSE officers who provided the technical details.

10. SPARSE officers, in discussion with the Civil Servants, formed the impression that DCLG might well be able to meet our and other rural authorities' concerns by finding the extra money outside the scope of the Grant Settlement.

11. SPARSE senior members and officers are clear that SPARSE councils should continue the pressure on their MPs – to supplement the work which SPARSE officers do behind the scenes in detailed discussion with the Civil Servants. If only for party political reasons I am confident that, in the run-up to Elections, next year, Ministers would want to be seen as helpful.

12. I expect to attend the next meeting of the SPARSE Group on 17<sup>th</sup> March, this Year.

Yours sincerely,

  
RUPERT REICHHOLD

## East Northamptonshire Council

Date of Council Meeting	26 / 2 / 2014
Report of Councillor	Rupert REICHHOLD

### Representation on Outside Body

Event/Meeting/Organisation attended	SPARSE - LGA S.I.G.
Date(s) attended	18/11/2013 & 15/7/2013
Nature of event/meeting	Regular meetings
Regional/County/Welland/District/Ward/other	U.K. wide
Matters of interest and/or significance to report *	Continuing lobbying of central Government to seek more equitable Grants for rural Councils SPARSE concerted the Rural Fair Shares Petition to the House of Commons ENC co-operated in this
Financial or resourcing issues *	Indications that Ministers now appreciate the case for improved funding for rural Councils.
Further action required by the Councillor (if any) *	Continue to maintain contact with all concerned and to report back - See attached most recent reports.
Request for action by ENC (if any) *	No action at present.
Relevance to the ENC aims and objectives *	Very relevant for ENC's continuing resource constraints
Date of Report	18/1/2014

\* Where necessary, please use an additional sheet.

**FROM Cllr Rupert Reichhold**

21<sup>st</sup> November, 2013.

Cllr Steven North,  
8, Kings Road,  
RUSHDEN,  
NN10 0DL

cc Cllr Harwood  
Cllr Lewis  
Cllr Taylor

David Oliver  
Sharn Matthews  
Glenn Hammons

Dear Steven,

**Meeting of SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group – 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2013**

I represented ENC at a meeting of the SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group in London on 18<sup>th</sup> November and write to report back to you and other key colleagues here. The main business at this meeting was to discuss prospects of modifications in the cuts to Grant for rural authorities following the Rural Fair Shares Petition to the House of Commons. SPARSE had concerted the Petition and many of us had signed it.

2. You and David Oliver are aware that Cllr Roger Begy has stepped down from the Chairmanship of SPARSE Rural to take on the chairmanship of another RSN group. We elected Cllr Cecelia Motley, a Shropshire Cllr, to succeed Roger. Cecelia impressed me as very competent and very fair.

**Presentation of the Petition**

3. We knew that MPs recently presented the Rural Fair Shares Petition to the House of Commons. The Petition, in essence, opposed the, planned, freezing of the inequity in the 2013 – 14 Grant Settlement and asked the House to urge the Government to reduce the Rural Penalty in staged steps by at least 2020. 119 MPs support the Petition.

4. DCLG Ministers, including Eric Pickles, were on the Front Bench throughout the presentations by individual MPs. The Ministers agreed to receive deputation from the All Parties Parliamentary Group for Rural Affairs and SPARSE officers accompanied the MPs to provide technical details.

**Looking ahead**

5. The SPARSE officers told us that they think that Ministers are beginning to appreciate the inequities for rural authorities and would like to be helpful. They told us also that LGA officers, in regular contact with DCLG civil servants consider that the civil

servants are sympathetic to the inequities and are looking at means of relieving these. This sympathy sounded stronger than the civilities customary in on-going negotiations.

6. DCLG do not want to make radical changes in the present, 5 years Grant Settlement because doing so would mean going out afresh to consultation. However, officers think that DCLG might well be able to meet our and other rural authorities' concerns by finding the extra money needed outside the scope of the Settlement. This has been done before, so we can be cautiously hopeful that the "sympathy" of the civil servants could point the way, when Ministers asked whether a way could be found !

#### **Political factor**

7. SPARSE officers said that – at any rate up to now, many MPs did not fully appreciate that the planned reductions in Government Grant over the next 2 years were bound to create very severe pressures on services which councils deliver – notably on Adult Social Services. They went on to say that Ministers must now be beginning to think of the implications of these pressures in the run-up to the General Election in 2015. If only and not only because of their need to defend Government –held seats and also to win others, Ministers would feel bound to make some positive Manifesto commitments on Government funding for councils in rural/sparsely populated constituencies.

8. SPARSE leaders reckoned that Brandon Lewis, MP, a DCLG Minister who was on the Front Bench in the House, during the presentation of the Petition, "had a good grasp of and some sympathy" for the case made in the Petition.

9. The "top table" at the meeting were clear. SPARSE Councils should "keep pushing" their MPs so that these could continue to remind Ministers both of the clear case for relief to SPARSE councils but also of the cogent political case for doing so. At ENC "the ball for this is in our court" and, as our Leader, you will wish to consider how we keep up our push !

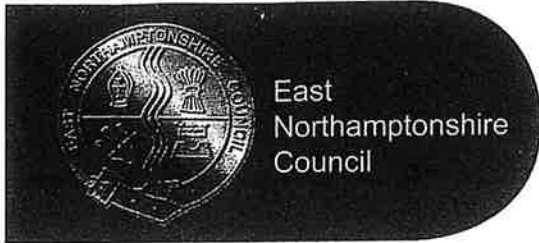
#### **Other significant business at the meeting**

10. We received a presentation about the difficulties for sub-post offices in Devonshire from an East Devon councillor who had also served as a sub-post office manager. SPARSE officers had already arranged for us to receive a presentation from Post Office Ltd at our next meeting.

11. We also received a presentation by the Corporate Affairs Manager at CALOR (Holly Sims) about CALOR's sponsored Rural Fuel Poverty Project. The presentation was very informative: it is covered also in the RSN on-line circulars.

Yours sincerely,

[sgd] Rupert



East  
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**Rupert Reichhold**  
**Councillor for Oundle Ward**

Home Address:  
2 Warren Bridge, OUNDLE, Peterborough PE8 4DQ  
Tel: 01832 274315

Date 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2013.

Cllr Steven North,  
8, Kings Road,  
RUSHDEN,  
NN10 0DL

cc Cllr Harwood  
Cllr Lewis  
Cllr Taylor

David Oliver  
Sharn Matthews  
Glenn Hammons

Dear Steven,

### **Meeting of SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group – 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2013**

I represented ENC at a very important meeting of the SPARSE Rural Special Interest Group in London on 15<sup>th</sup> July and write to report back to you and other key colleagues here. The main purpose of the meeting was to inform SPARSE Councils' representatives of the plans for a Petition, through Graham Stuart, MP, and the House of Commons, to Ministers to ask for modifications in the cuts to Grant for rural authorities.

2. You will have received the letter which Graham Biggs, Chief Executive of SPARSE sent on 11<sup>th</sup> July to you and all other Leaders of SPARSE-member Councils, stating the planned Petition, explaining the process, and inviting your cooperation in obtaining as many signatures as can be obtained.

#### **The Petition**

#### **3. The Petition**

- "Declares that the petitioners believe that the Local Government Finance Settlement is unfair to rural communities; notes that the Rural Penalty in urban areas receive 50% more support per head than rural areas despite higher costs in rural service delivery; and opposes the planned freezing of this inequity in the 2013-14 settlement for the six years until 2020.
- The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to reduce the Rural Penalty in staged steps by at least 10% by 2020."

4. The Petition is clear, equitable and precisely-worded – and one which is very much in ENC's best interests.

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Council for the District of East Northamptonshire  
[www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk)  
[www.east-northamptonshire.co.uk](http://www.east-northamptonshire.co.uk)



## **The Process**

5. We and all other, 95, SPARSE Councils are asked to collect as many signatures as we can on the, standard, forms provided: we can make photocopies to accommodate all the signatures, including names & addresses of the signatories we obtain; and then to return all the forms to The Rural Fair Share Campaign c/o Graham Stuart, MP at the House of Commons to reach him **by 30<sup>th</sup> September**. We must send the originals of forms completed – not any photocopies of completed forms.

6. Since this is a Petition to the House of Commons there are two rules. SPARSE have sent us, ENC ~~have~~ two standard forms – one for each of the two Parliamentary constituencies which ENC serve. People signing will need to sign the form headed by the name of their Parliamentary constituency. The other rule is, of course, that the wording of the Petition (para 3 of this letter), stated at the top of each form, stands – and that nobody alters or adds to this. This wording is just right in any case !

## **The logic and value of the Petition**

7. The logic of the Petition is, of course, that all SPARSE Councils will be acting together: in unity there is strength. A further important factor is that the right of petition to the Crown and through the House of Commons is a long-established element of the British Constitution – traceable back to 1688/9. In taking part in this Petition we would be acting legitimately as well as reasonably; nobody could hold it against us.

8. The value of the Petition is, of course, that it seeks to remedy a wrong – the constraints of the Grant Distribution mechanism which does not satisfactorily reflect the greater costs of delivering councils' services in rural areas. More specifically, the Petition asks for planned freezing of this inequity.

9. Last year, SPARSE officers informed us, the Government did agree that rural areas needed extra money and increased some sparsity formula elements to help close the gap. BUT the Government only allowed a small part of this gain to reach rural authorities, delaying the phasing-in of the rest until at least 2020 !

10. Whatever views we may have as to whether Ministers will agree to at least some measure of relief, as asked for in the Petition I am clear that the bottom line is "Those who do not ask do not get"! So taking part in this Petition is, I strongly recommend, in our, ENC's best interests.

11. Moreover, as Graham Biggs points out in his letter to you & other Leaders, the Petition is just part of the planned parliamentary activity to seek fairer funding for rural areas. Graham expressly appreciates that this process can not prevent the planned cuts; however, at a time when "more savage" [his words] cuts have to be made on top of those already introduced, SPARSE member councils – including us, "seek to achieve a more realistic balance in relation to rural and urban areas" – Graham's words.

### **Obtaining the signatures**

12. The Petition is a cross-parties exercise: Graham Stuart, MP, who is concerting it, is doing so expressly in his capacity as chairman of the All Parties Parliamentary Group for Rural Affairs. We can, therefore, I think, quite properly, ask David Oliver for our ENC officers cooperation in organising arrangements for inviting and obtaining signatures.

13. I suggest that you discuss with David and others concerned.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rupert', written in a cursive style.

Rupert Reichhold



**East Northamptonshire Council**

Date of Council Meeting	26/2/014
Report of Councillor	Rupert REICHHOLD

**Representation on Outside Body**

Event/Meeting/Organisation attended	[SERVE] VOLUNTEER ACTION
Date(£) attended	24 September 2013
Nature of event/meeting	A.G.M.
Regional/County/Wolland/ District/Ward/other	
Matters of interest and/or significance to report *	VA - a voluntary organisation, continue to provide an essential service for people with no access to public transport, VA continues to be an excellent, very well managed organisation.
Financial or resourcing issues *	VA receive ENC Funding.
Further action required by the Councillor (if any) *	Continue to maintain contact
Request for action by ENC (if any) *	None at present.
Relevance to the ENC aims and objectives *	Very relevant to community transport needs, social cohesion and safety.
Date of Report	18/2/2014

## East Northamptonshire Council

Date of Council Meeting	26/2/014
Report of Councillor	Rupert REICHOLD

### Representation on Outside Body

Event/Meeting/Organisation attended	CHAT Youth Counselling
Date(s) attended	a) 9 October 2013. b) 11 December 2013
Nature of event/meeting	a) AGM b) Management Committee
Regional/County/Welland/ District/Ward/other	
Matters of interest and/or significance to report *	This voluntary organisation continue to provide confidential advice by trained counsellors to young people.
Financial or resourcing issues *	Funders include NHS CAMHS. Ward Cllr's Empowerment Fund secured a grant for Therapy support materials
Further action required by the Councillor (if any) *	Maintain contact with CHAT Committee and represent its concerns to ENC when necessary.
Request for action by ENC (if any) *	None at present
Relevance to the ENC aims and objectives *	Very relevant to community cohesion and stability
Date of Report	18/2/2014

## East Northamptonshire Council

Date of Council Meeting	26/2/014
Report of Councillor	Rupert REICHHOLD

### Representation on Outside Body

Event/Meeting/Organisation attended	SUPPORTING PEOPLE
Date(s) attended	] No meetings
Nature of event/meeting	
Regional/County/Welland/District/Ward/other	Provision of housing with support.
Matters of interest and/or significance to report *	NCC Social Services and Probation Services provide support to vulnerable people and ENC, through SPIRE etc, enable the provision of housing. NCC's policy and systems are evolving to a "Prevention" Strategy.
Financial or resourcing issues *	NCC are increasingly concentrating resources to prevent potentially difficult cases worsening.
Further action required by the Councillor (if any) *	Maintain close contact with ENC Head of Planning as NCC systems evolve - to try and ensure that ENC's housing duties are fully met
Request for action by ENC (if any) *	As above
Relevance to the ENC aims and objectives *	Critical to ENC's duties - and powers for provision of housing to vulnerable people
Date of Report	18/2/2014