

Defra 'Strong Rural Communities' Departmental Strategic Objective

Note to Stakeholders and Partners

I thought it would be helpful to share with you the indicator list and current baseline of data for our Strong Rural Communities Departmental Strategic Objective. Many of you have already seen and been involved in discussions on the working drafts of this. The DSO indicators are now published in full on the Defra internet site, where partners, stakeholders and the public can easily access it. It can be found here:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/dso/index.htm>

For the current Spending Review period (CSR 07) effective from 2008-09 to 2010-11, each government department has developed a set of Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs). These set out a picture of what the Department as a whole aims to achieve over the next three years and provides an overarching framework for performance management and progress reporting.

This measure provides a robust way to focus our activities, for example on current priority areas such as affordable housing and rural economies. You may note that against many (although by no means all) of the measures rural areas appear to be performing well when compared to the national average. Whilst this is clearly good news, we fully recognise that there is no room for complacency. An average figure can, and in many cases will, mask considerable variation between different groups and different areas. With this in mind, our analysis of these indicators will not stop at providing a simple overall picture as illustrated in the DSO. We continue to work closely with the departments that lead on each policy area to get underneath the headline figures and find out in detail how policy and delivery are manifested on the ground. In this, as in so many things, we are working with colleagues at the Commission for Rural Communities.

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