



**Environment, Food
and Rural Affairs
Committee**

2 December 2025

Rt Hon. David Lammy MP
Secretary of State
Ministry of Justice
[by email]

Subject: Rural-proofing policies

Dear David,

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee is examining how rural proofing is being implemented across government to ensure that policies take account of the needs of rural communities. As part of this work, we are seeking information from departments on their approach to rural proofing and the outcomes achieved.

As such, we would be grateful if you could provide responses to the following questions:

Departmental Approach

- How does your department incorporate rural proofing into policy development and delivery?
- What mechanisms are in place to ensure rural considerations are identified and addressed at an early stage?

Collaboration with Defra

- How does your department work with Defra to support rural proofing?
- Are there formal processes or guidance that underpin this collaboration?

Funding and Resources

- Have you carried out any assessment into the additional costs of providing and accessing services in rural areas?
- Do you allocate any funding to support service delivery and access in rural areas?

Ans

Training and Capability

- What take up has there been for the training module on "understanding rural areas", provided by Civil Service Learning?
- Is any guidance or training on rural proofing provided to staff beyond the Civil Service Learning module?
- How do you ensure that staff have the necessary skills and awareness to apply rural proofing effectively?

Policy Examples

- Please provide examples of policies where rural proofing has led to changes in design or implementation.
- Are there policies that have been particularly successful in delivering benefits for rural communities?

Policy priorities

- What is the most recent assessment your Department has made regarding access to free legal advice in rural areas? How are you working to tackle the existence of 'Legal Aid deserts' in rural areas across the country?

I would be grateful for a response by 12 January.

Yours Alistair



Alistair Carmichael MP
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee