



comprehensive Rural Strategy, following the publication of a new study.

The report, published today by the Rural Services Network, calls for action by the Government, citing concerns that the UK's exit from the EU could serve to compound existing rural challenges.

The Bishop of Ely, Stephen Conway (pictured), who has previously called for a rural strategy, said: "We welcome the Rural Services Network's report, and echo its call for a cross-Government rural strategy.

"The Church of England is at the heart of rural communities with around two thirds of our 16,000 churches in rural areas, and half of our 4,700 schools found in the countryside. Where the post office, the pub and shop have disappeared, these are often the only community focus left, and are crucial to the identity and wellbeing of villages and rural areas.

"We are committed to helping rural communities flourish through our churches and schools, but this requires fit-for-purpose infrastructure, transport, job opportunities and the other vital services for which this report calls."

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/bishop-backs-call-rural-strategy>