



Essex Rural Partnership

STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th December 2008

10.00 am, RCCE Offices, Feering.

Present:

	Representing	Orgn	Initials
Cllr. John Jowers	Chair	ECC	(JJ)
Vice Chair – Canon John Brown	Vice Chair	RCCE	(JB)
Joy Sheppard	CAG	EALC	(JS)
Suzanne Harris	CAG & EERF	RCCE	(SH)
Cllr. Peter Baggott	EnvAG	EALC	(PB)
Dianne Hardy	EconAG	Haven Gateway	(DH)
Peter Chillingworth	ELGA		(PC)
Cllr. John Buchanan	EERF	EALC	(JBU)
Philip Wilson	facilitator orgn	ECC	(PW)
Nick Shuttleworth	facilitator orgn	RCCE	(NS)
Kirsty Monk	(minutes)	RCCE	(KM)

Apologies:

Terry Taber	EconAG (FSB) (TT)	Cllr. Mick Page	EERF (MP)
Richard Woolley	EERF (RW)	Chris Allen	DA (CA)
John Hall	EnvAG (EWT) (JH)	Ed Gregory	ECC (EG)
Cllr. Wendy Scattergood	ELGA (WS)	Sarah Prentice	Go East (SP)

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Cllr John Jowers welcomed all to the meeting.

Action By

Apologies were read (please see above for details).

1 Minutes of the previous Steering Group meeting, 24th October 2008

Matters of Accuracy.

No matters of accuracy were raised and those present agreed the minutes.

2 Matters Arising

Marine Bill and Shoreline Management Plan

JJ advised that the Marine Bill had now been read and that it held major implications for coastal areas in Essex. JJ felt that the Essex Rural Partnership should be aware of these implications and the effect of the Shoreline Management Plan, in order to start the process of forward planning for the necessary changes to come.

Action: Summary of implications of the Marine bill to be circulated to the Steering Group

KM

JS wanted to know who to advise members of parishes in coastal communities to approach if they need help.

PhW advised that he or Angela Balcome at ECC would be happy to help and assist with any enquiries from coastal Parishes. He also reported that the Essex Rural Commission was taking a keen interest in problems affecting coastal areas in Essex.

JJ reported that ECC would be looking into how they could address the problems affecting coastal areas. There had traditionally been a lack of funding invested into the smaller parished coastal areas.

PC asked if there was to be a long process of consultation as a result of the Marine Bill.

KM

JJ felt that that on this occasion that changes will be pushed through quickly and the consultation process will not be drawn out.

Natural England ERP Attendance Future meetings.

Outstanding Action: Invitation to Natural England to attend a future Full ERP Partnership Meeting in order to expand on rural issues/ Marine Bill in greater detail. *(This has been delayed as the next full ERP partnership meeting will be a consultation event).*

3 Essex Rural Commission (ERC)

Review of the 4th November Meeting

SH felt that the joint meeting with the ERC had not gone as intended. As a Partnership we did not have the opportunity to talk to the Commission about the role, aims and work of the Essex Rural Partnership; although there was an opportunity to briefly review the 6 key rural priorities.

The Steering Group felt that although some positives had come out of the meeting, that the main objectives of this meeting had not been met; the fact that the invitation to the meeting had broadened out to other groups had changed the focus of the event.

JB felt that the ERP had not had the opportunity of addressing the Commission and it must be an urgent priority to try to arrange another meeting with the ERC to redress this.

JJ hoped that the findings of the ERC would prove a useful document which ECC could take clear steps from to help rural communities. He noted that the elections (11th June) will mean a slight delay in implementing such actions.

Action:

The Steering Group agreed to arrange (if possible) a further meeting with the ERC early in 2009 with the following proposed format:

- The 2nd meeting should be based on ERP expert testimony and debate with a few expert members rather than a general workshop format with the full ERP Partnership.
- ERP Members would be chosen to address the ERC regarding the role and work of the ERP and their expertise in key ERP Essex Strategy Priorities. (SH/PW)
- PhW, SH, KM to liaise to set up the meeting with the ERC.

PhW/SH/
KM

4 ERC – Other Issues

After the Commission Reports its Findings

Action: Steering Group requested that some mechanism be put into place to ensure that the ERP were forwarded the Commission's findings to immediately coincide with any press releases.

PhW/SH

5 **Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA)**

The Steering Group felt that as planning was such a crucial cross cutting element of rural regeneration in Essex that more representation was needed in the ERP.

SH KM

Action: SH and KM to invite new members.

6 **Essex Rural Partnership Strategy Review
Review Process and Timescale, Consultation**

ERP Consultation Event

- SH proposed that the next full ERP Partnership Meeting next year be a consultation event (24th February 2008, Reid Rooms) and that in addition to existing members it be opened out to a wider audience.

JS offered to assist in publicising the event to Parish and Town Councils.

Action:

The Steering Group agreed the proposed action, SH and KM to publicise and organise.

KM/SH

7 **Local Area Agreement Update**

Report : Essex Partnership Forum Meeting 28th November

JBu felt that the event had been well organised and the information provided useful. Proposals had been agreed and were to be passed forward to the Essex Management Board for final approval.

SH advised members that some of the detail in the LAA Action plan circulated at this event was not accurate, e.g. the performance reward grants allocation was incorrect in some instances.

NS reported that the total amount awarded for the performance reward grants (PRG) has not yet been made known.

8 **Items to take forward to the East England Rural Forum (EERF)**

Social Inclusion

SH invited members of the Steering Group to bring forward any items that they wished her to take before the next EERF meeting in December.

DH wished to raise the issue of potential lack of future funding for social inclusion projects due to severe Government cuts to EEDAs budget (also in Economic Participation funding). Diversion of EEDAs funds to help the housing market had taken money from social inclusion. In addition to this, pressure as a result of the credit crunch could lead to the desire to spend money on projects which offer easier more positive outcomes; these may prove more attractive than helping the hardest to reach groups, which were traditionally more intensive, more expensive and had fewer positive outcomes.

PC wished to raise the issue of IT training for elderly people in rural areas so they could take advantage of the internet during the credit crunch.

DH advised the meeting of the Interact Project offering refurbished PCs to vulnerable groups.

9 **Post Offices Update**

SH reported that in addition to Station Way in Buckhurst Hill, 2 further rural Post Offices were due to officially reopen shortly (Little Hallingbury and Henham).

KM advised that the ECC initiative had also been looking at a different model to help areas affected by recent closures which would not be an actual Post Office but would offer similar services.

KM also reported that the Post Office Card Account contract had been awarded solely to Post Office Limited; this was very good news as if they had lost the tender it could have resulted in a further 3000 Post Offices being lost.

10 **A.O.B**

ERP Environment Action Group

PB advised that he had met to discuss the future and focus of the ERP Environment Action Group with a view to securing a more Essex specific focus in future. Nothing further had been heard since this meeting.

SH

Action:

SH to chase for further action on EnvAG.

Growing our Future Food Event

SH reported back from an event regarding growing our future food which highlighted the need for us to grow locally and preserve agricultural land for food production in response to future population growth and demand.

Inspire East Event

KM

JBu advised that he attended the Annual Inspire East conference recently looking at sustainable communities and the future of the RDA's.

Action: KM to contact Inspire East to re-invite them to become members.

East of England Association of Local Town and Parish Councils

JBu advised that they were lobbying Government to reinstate Parish and Town Council Representation on the bodies that will replace the Regional Assemblies.

Migrant Workers Forum and Update

SH reported that the Migrant Workers Forum had been held on 14th November. Funding was only available to bring about the initial meeting; it was hoped by EEDA that the bodies involved would pick up the expense of future meetings! Paul Williams (ECC) also attended from the ERP. SH felt that another meeting was needed with more Essex experts in this field attending.

Action:

SH to liaise with JJ and Paul Williams regarding a future Migrant Workers event.

DH reported that she had information from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) on the impact of the loss of Migrant workers in rural areas.

Action

DH to summarise the IPPR info and take it to the ERP Economic Action Group, a copy also to be emailed to John Jowers.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

Full Partnership Meeting (Consultation Event) 24th February 2009, Reid Rooms.
ERP Steering Group Meeting will follow after lunch

Meeting concluded 11.55 am