



Essex Rural Partnership

STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd July 2009
RCCE Offices, 2.00 pm

Present:	Representing	Orgn	Initials
Cllr John Jowers	Chairman	ECC	(JJ)
Canon John Brown	Vice Chair	RCCE	(JB)
Suzanne Harris	CAG & EERF	RCCE	(SH)
Cllr. Peter Baggott	EnvAG	EALC	(PB)
Cllr. John Buchanan	EERF	EALC	(JBU)
Cllr. Mick Page	EERF	ECC	(MP)
Dominic Petre	EcAG	EET	(DP)
Nick Shuttleworth	facilitator orgn	RCCE	(NS)
Peter Chillingworth	LGA (Essex)	CBC	(PC)
Cllr Wendy Scattergood	LGA (Essex)		(WS)
Ed Gregory	facilitator orgn	ECC	(EG)
Attending:			
Kirsty Monk	(minutes)	RCCE	(KM)
Apologies:			
Richard Woolley	EERF	RCCE	(RW)
Joy Sheppard	CAG	EALC	(JS)
Philip Wilson	EcAG	ECC	(PW)
John Hall	EnvAG	EWT	(JH)
Chris Allen	EEDA	EEDA	(CA)

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, 15th May 2009

Matters of Accuracy.

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

2 Matters Arising from the previous meeting.

Essex Police

SH reported that since the Full ERP Partnership meeting she had spoken to Essex Police regarding taking forward their rural policing work. She had been asked for and passed on a list of appropriate organisations and contact names with this aim in mind. A letter is due to go out to these organisations from Essex Police asking for their involvement in rural working and possibly an event planned for rural officers in October.

Proposed Rescue Fund to Support Essential Rural Services

EG advised that he had submitted a report to ECC regarding the above fund, initial responses were favourable but the process of putting forward the fund was still in its early stages.

Further Matters arising were covered in the main agenda items

3 **Essex Rural Commission**

EG Reported that an initial draft of the report had been presented to committee and that the final report would now be launched in Maldon on 11th September 2009.

4 **Essex Rural Partnership Strategy Review Working Group**

JJ explained that the hope for today's meeting was to establish that the important key principles, priorities and objectives of the Rural Strategy had been met in this draft and for the Steering Group to agree them. However homogenizing, rephrasing and refining the Strategy should perhaps be more appropriately assigned to a small working group drawn from the Draft Strategy Working Group.

JJ proposed that a task group be set up to take on the final shaping of the Strategy to the Steering Group.

The Steering Group agreed the set up of this task group and it was proposed that NS, PW, EG, and SH be invited to carry out this work.

Action

SH to arrange Strategy Task Group meeting to progress the production of the public draft.

SH/NS/
EG/PW

Review of the Strategy by the Steering Group.

SH outlined the drafting process to date and invited members to comment on the current draft, which had previously been circulated to the Steering Group by email. (*Comments are noted in document section order for ease of reference*).

Context and Strategic Position – “Summary of recent policies and strategies which have had influence on us”

SH invited suggestions on additional policies and Strategies which should be noted in this section.

JBU Suggested the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) could be mentioned.

JJ was concerned that the RES & RSS documents had not been formally adopted yet. He felt that because there are imminent possible changes due to regional statutory organisations, the impact of these changes could mean reference to their Strategies would date the ERP Rural Strategy.

The Steering Group felt that both the RES and RSS should be mentioned but it would be necessary to qualify them and explain their importance and validity in terms of “possible impact” on the Rural Strategy.

DP suggested the Greater Essex Tourism Strategy should be referenced.

JJ suggested the Shoreline Management Plan was an important document as we are the county with the biggest coastline in the country; coastal areas may also attract substantial regeneration funding in the future.

MP felt that reference to PPS4, 6 and 7 should be highlighted, if not here, in the planning section.

Economic Potential of Rural Essex

JBU – add “airports” after “port gateways”.

Successes and Failures

The Steering Group felt that although the title was honest and open perhaps “Successes and Set backs” or “Success and Disappointments” may be more appropriate heading. The Group felt this section could be distilled down to 2 sides.

PB felt that the paragraph re the Environmental Action Group (EnvAG) needed work and perhaps reference to the Essex Partnership should be removed.

JB felt that we could show that we understand why the EnvAG did not work, that we are concerned about environmental issues and their impact on rural and what we intend to do in the future to address this issue etc.

Steering Group

ELGA to LGA - Local Government Association

Full Partnership members-(to take out of this section and put in as an appendix)

To Add:

LGA

CPRE

Diocese of Chelmsford

ETA – shortly to change its name- references this fact.

EERF

Land Issues

PB felt that access to green spaces needed greater emphasis in this section, especially as it was one of the priorities taken forward to the Essex Rural Commission.

Lobbying

SH explained that originally each key theme section had its own lobbying section and when the document is read as a whole it becomes apparent that overarching lobbying issues were being repeated. It was decided by the working group to pull the lobbying issues together and to this end SH has created a table of potential ERP lobbying issues.

SH invited suggestions from the Steering Group.

The following suggestions were made:

- To make it clear that these were potential lobbying issues.
- Listing lobbying issues by National, Regional and Local Level
- Add lobbying the Essex Planning Officers Association
- Explaining who the strategic bodies/ organisations are and why we are lobbying them
- Identify potential lobbying partners

General Suggestions

- The Group felt that specific reference to Action Groups in the key themes sections should be removed.
- That specific references and details of projects or actions should be modified.
- That a consistent authorial voice be established throughout the document to homogenise and create a cohesive balanced Strategy.
- That all Council Officers for each department receive a copy of the new Strategy.

5 **Proposed Strategy Launch Event.**

SH explained that the ERP Strategy Launch Event would be held in the second half of November 2009 timed to follow Essex County Council's published response to the Rural Commissions Report.

SH invited suggestions as to a suitable venue for between 100-120 delegates from the Group.

DP suggested Ingatestone Hall as a possible launch venue.

The Steering Group agreed this choice of venue.

Action

SH and DP to liaise regarding hire of the hall for the ERP Strategy Launch Event. SH/SP

6 **Essex Partnership**

Essex Partnership Conference for Stakeholders and Partners, was held on 9th July 2009, at the Community Stadium, Colchester- SH and JBu felt that it was a positive informative conference with useful workshops.

7 **East of England Rural Forum (EERF) – a brief update**

SH reported that herself, EG and JBu had attended an EERF Forum meeting in Swaffham, Norfolk which focused on "access" as its theme. It highlighted good practice in the form of a transport scheme aimed at 16-18 year olds which "bused in" students to Eastern College.

SH reported that the EERF Steering Group was discussing creation of a 'Regional Rural White Paper'. The new ERP Strategy will feed into this document.

8 **EEDA**

Responses on the points raised at the Accountability Meeting

SH reported that she had received a standard but somewhat unsatisfactory response from EEDA (which has been previously circulated to the ERP Steering Group) regarding the points raised. SH invited members of the Steering Group to contact her if they wished to pursue these issues further.

9 **A.O.B**

DP highlighted the possible negative impact of the Vetting and Barring Scheme to small businesses and tourist attractions which will be brought into effect in October 2009 by the Independent Safeguarding Association.

Action

DP and JJ to liaise in order to ensure a clear understanding of the ECC interpretation of this scheme and its implementation. DP/JJ

10 **Date of next ERP Steering Group Meeting:**

Date 9th September 2009, 2.00pm, The Sailings Millennium Hall, Great Sailing to follow the morning Full ERP Partnership Meeting and lunch.

Meeting concluded 4.20pm