



Essex Rural Partnership

Tuesday 24th April 2018 2pm – 5pm

Essex Young Farmers Club HQ, Chatham Green, Chelmsford Essex

Minutes

1 Welcome and Introduction

Cllr Simon Walsh, Chair, Essex Rural Partnership.

2 Apologies – Please see appendix

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2017

- Approval - Correction re Michael Gove – Cllr Simon Walsh
Approved

4 Brexit – Opportunities and Challenges for Rural Essex

Cllr. Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader, Essex County Council and Chair, Local Government Association Brexit Task & Finish Group.

Cllr Bentley addressed the meeting in his LGA capacity, where he was pressing to ensure the voice of local government was heard in the Brexit process. He informed the group the official exit date was set for 29th March 2019 with discussions on a subsequent transition period ongoing. There remained a high degree of uncertainty on the outcomes of the negotiations and it appeared likely that clarity on many issues would not come until near the end of any transition period. Whichever form it eventually takes Brexit would present a number of risks and opportunities for local communities and local economies. Cllr Bentley stated that “Tough negotiations need to be centred and focused for our residents and the UK. This is about people’s lives and children’s lives and their welfare”. For the full presentation please see the [ERP website](#)

During the question time session, Cllr Bentley confirmed that LEADER funds have to be allocated by 29th March 2019 and the deadlines for expressions of interest for the Growth Programme is 31st May 2018. Concerns were raised about the future of rural funding programmes such as LEADER, after Brexit. Without designated rural programmes, bids from rural areas would have to compete with urban ones in future, which could result in rural projects being disadvantaged. Cllr Bentley responded by highlighting the Government’s commitment to create the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as a successor to European structural funds. He appreciated there were no details on this at present but he understood there would be a consultation later in the year. Members were encouraged to email Cllr Bentley with questions on any issue that concerned them.

5 ERP Update

Nick Shuttleworth, Executive Director, Rural Community Council of Essex

Report from ERP Strategic Board meeting – 9th April 2018

Essex Rural Strategy – this was the focal point of ERP’s work. Nick emphasised the importance of monitoring delivery and would provide the October meeting with a progress report, based on evidence from the individual chapter leads.

Fly Tip Task and Finish Group – the group had proved extremely helpful in bringing together organisations to strengthen collaboration and information sharing. The next meeting of the group would consider how this work could be sustained on a long-term basis.

Defra Rural & Farming Network – Defra were requesting ideas for improving engagement with local partnerships. The ERP Strategic Board wanted to see more visits by Defra ministers to see what is happening on the ground.

Defra consultation, ‘Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit’ – Nick emphasised the importance of this consultation on future farming and rural support. The

consultation closed on 8th May.

Future programme of meetings – the Strategic Board were proposing 2 full partnership meetings and 3 Strategic Board meetings in 2018. All dates to be confirmed.

ERP Bulletin - Nick highlighted that members can keep up with news more generally with the ERP Bulletin, published monthly. Sign up with Lizzie if not currently received.

TO ACTION LR - Cllr Freeman add to bulletin list – completed

Robert Erith questioned why the Essex Rural Strategy did not mention the Dedham Vale & Stour Valley AONB. 50% of it was in Essex and there was a proposal to extend it further.

6 Community Libraries and the Future of the Library Service - Please see powerpoint [ERP website](#)
Liz Sutton, Senior Communications and Engagement Specialist, Essex Libraries.

Liz reported on the results of a consultation on the future of the library service in Essex. Significant changes were being made to the mobile service, which would now serve 217 locations, once every 3 weeks. The minimum stop time would be increased. Essex Libraries were promoting the concept of Community Libraries, following a successful pilot scheme in Tendring. These libraries would be run by volunteers at venues such as village halls, with support provided by Essex Libraries. The consultation highlighted 52 venues available to use, with 124 people expressing an interest in helping. Liz thanked RCCE for its help with the consultation events and with the Tendring pilot.

Rt Revd Roger Morris, Bishop of Colchester, suggested Liz speak with Revd Janet Nicholls as churches could provide a venue for Community Libraries.

7 Superfast Essex – Progress and Future Plans - Please see powerpoint [ERP website](#)

Lucy Dickinson, Superfast Essex Communications Manager, Essex County Council

General Rollout - Lucy reported that Superfast Essex (SE) is committed to extending superfast broadband coverage to as many homes and businesses as possible across Essex by 2021. The ambition to reach as close as possible to 99% of the county. Currently Superfast Essex has contracts in place with Openreach and Gigaclear to reach 149,400 premises under their Phase 2 and Phase 3 rollouts by end 2019/early 2020. Check the status for your address using their interactive rollout map at: www.superfastessex.org/maps. It is updated at least once a month. SE are in the process of planning a Phase 4 and will share further information as these plans develop at: www.superfastessex.org/whats happening next

Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme - Lucy reported that anyone not currently in any Superfast Essex or commercial operators' plans might be interested in the National Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, launched by the Government earlier this year. It supports businesses and residents, if part of a business-led community group, to access funding support towards the cost of installing a full fibre connection capable of gigabit speeds (1000Mbps or 1Gbps) regardless of whether superfast speeds are available. Residents can access £500 each and businesses from £500 to £3000.

More at: www.superfastessex.org/gigabitvoucher

Community Wi-Fi Scheme - Applications are still open for the Community Wi-Fi Scheme to help your community hub (eg community centre or village hall) access Wi-Fi. Up to £400 is available from the Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) per hub. There have been 23 successful applications to date, and 5 hubs are known to be live. The scheme was currently set to run until October 2018. More at: www.superfastessex.org/communitywifischeme

8 Update on Funding Programmes

- LEADER – Beverly Davies, Essex Rivers Project Manager, Rural Community Council of Essex
Beverly reminded the meeting that LEADER funding could potentially support any business operating in a rural area and that funding had to be allocated by 29th March 2019. In Essex Rivers, interest in the programme had increased significantly over the past year and taking account of projects in the pipeline it was realistic to think that the full funding allocation would be spent.

Beverly summarised progress in the other three Local Action Groups (LAGs) that covered Essex; Eastern Plateau was fully spent, Wool Towns was temporarily closed for applications and Heritage Coast was still open for applications.

Robert Davidson, Chair of Essex Rivers commented on the great work Beverly and RCC, as accountable body, had done to promote LEADER funding. He was concerned that such expertise could be lost if there was not a transition from LEADER to a new programme.

- Local Services Fund (LSF) – John Gili-Ross and Louise Gambardella, EALC

The Fund was providing revenue funding for local community projects. EALC was managing it on behalf of ECC. So far, 35 applications had been received and 13 projects funded. Examples of suitable projects were:

- Handyman Schemes
- Business Apprenticeships
- A Community Hub
- Litter Picking
- Grounds Person Apprenticeships
- A Community Cafe

LSF had a simple application process but it was advised to speak with Louise at EALC first.

All forms are available from EALC website: www.ealc.gov.uk/local-services-fund

If you have any queries please contact:

Louise Gambardella on 01371 879722 or at

louise.gambardella@ealc.gov.uk

Please see powerpoint via [ERP website](#)

9 A.O.B.

There was no other business.

Attendees:

Mr	Simon	Amstutz	Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Partnership
Mr	John	Anderson	EALC
Mr	Yianni	Andrews	RSPB
Cllr	Kevin	Bentley	Essex County Council
PC	Paul	Brady	Essex Police
Revd			
Canon	John	Brown	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)
Mr	David	Burrows	Maldon District Council
Ms	Karen	Buttress	Chelmsford City Council
Ms	Joy	Darby	Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)
Cllr	Robert	Davidson	Essex Rivers LAG
Ms	Beverly	Davies	RCCE - Essex Rivers
Mr	Les	Davies	Essex Fire & Rescue
Ms	Lucy	Dickinson	Superfast Essex Communications
Mr	Ken	Edwards	Galleywood Good Neighbours
Mr	Clive	Emmett	Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford
Mr	Oliver	Everott	Essex Fire & Rescue
Mr	Lloyd	Felton	County Broadband
Cllr	John	Freeman	District/Borough/City local authorities
Ms	Louise	Gambardella	EALC
Cllr	John	Gili-Ross	Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)

Mr	Neil	Harper	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)
Mr	Roger	Hirst	Police and Crime Commissioner
Mr	Ian	Le Gros	Royal Horticultural Society
Mr	Dan	Kudla	Rochford District Council
Mr	Andrew	Lowing	Rochford District Council
Rt			
Revd	Roger	Morris	Diocese of Chelmsford
Ms	Tricia	Moxey	CPREssex
Revd	Janet	Nicholls	Diocese of Chelmsford
Ms	Elizabeth	Rose	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)
Cllr	Peter	Schwier	Braintree District Council
Mr	Adam	Scott	National Farmers Union
Mr	Nick	Shuttleworth	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)
Ms	Trisha	Staerck	Essex Police
Ms	Liz	Sutton	Essex Libraries
Cllr	Simon	Walsh	Essex County Council
Mr	Philip	Wilson	Essex County Council

Apologies:

Ms	Rosemary	Alexander	Farming Community Network
Ms	Lindsey	Allen	Forestry Commission
Ms	Michelle	Bennett	Age UK Essex
Ms	Lisa	Bone	Visit Essex
Mr	Simon	Brice	NFU
Mr	Anthony	Buston	Essex County Council
Ms	Sue	Carter	Royal Horticultural Society
Cllr	Penny	Channer	Maldon District Council / Essex County Council
Mrs	Joy	Darby	Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)
Cllr	Peter	Davey	Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)
Mr	Keith	Davis	Farming Community Network
Insp	Ian	Gennery	Essex Police
Pc	Matt	Harkness	Essex Police
Mr	Tim	Hayward-Smith	CDA Herts
Mr	Paul	Hinsley	Essex County Council
Mr	Mark	Iley	Essex Biodiversity Project
Dr	Andrew	Impey	Essex Wildlife Trust
Cllr	Sheila	Jackman	Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)
Ms	Lorraine	Jarvis	Chelmsford CVS
The Ven	Robin	King	Diocese of Chelmsford
Mr	Tim	Middleton	Writtle College
Mr	Michael	Minta	Diocese of Chelmsford
Mr	Mark	Nowers	RSPB
Mrs	Rosemary	Padfield	National Farmers Union
Mr	Chris	Philpot	Barleylands Farm Museum & Visitors Centre
Mr	Johnathan	Rhodes	National Trust
Ms	Chris	Rust	Maldon District Council
Mr	Nick	Sandford	The Woodland Trust
Mr	David	Sollis	Healthwatch

Mr	Humphrey	Squier	Private sector business
Mr	Andrew	Thorpe-Apps	Chelmsford Educational Foundation
Mr	Edwin	VanEk	The Woodland Trust
Ms	Helen	Ward	Natural England