



Essex Rural Partnership

Wednesday 10th October 2018 11am – 1.15pm (lunch to follow)

Essex Young Farmers Club HQ, Chatham Green, Chelmsford Essex

Minutes

1 Welcome and Introduction

Cllr Simon Walsh, Chair, Essex Rural Partnership, welcomed delegates and in particular thanked Tim Goodship, Director of Rural Policy at Defra for taking the trouble to attend the meeting at a particularly busy time for the Department.

2 Apologies - Please see appendix

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2018

Approved

4 Defra - Policy Priorities Post-Brexit

Tim Goodship, Director of Rural Policy, Defra.

TG provided a summary of important issues facing rural businesses and communities. He highlighted current policy priorities including the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Agriculture Bill and the Industrial Strategy. TG examined the challenges presented by an ageing society in rural areas and concluded by emphasising the importance of the partnership between Defra and the ACRE Network of Rural Community Councils.

Please see full powerpoint presentation on [ERP website](#)

Questions:

SB – Welcomed Defra’s commitment to the work of Rural Community Councils, but questioned whether the existing level of funding would be maintained in the current financial climate?

TG – Confirmed the intention to maintain funding for next year, but was unable to make a longer term commitment at present. He did emphasise that Ministers valued the role performed by RCCs.

NJ – With an ageing workforce within the forestry and farming industries there is a need to keep young people living and working in rural communities. Where do we stand with apprenticeship schemes?

TG – Department of Education acknowledged the importance of rural and countryside skills, however accessibility to a college was often a problem. A bursary fund to provide support with travel to and from rural areas would be helpful.

AS - The NFU believes the Agriculture Bill must focus more specifically on agriculture, by underpinning a farming model in the UK that is sustainable, productive and plays an active role in delivering food production and public goods. We support the Government’s intention to introduce a new system of support payments where financial assistance is provided to deliver public goods, alongside additional measures to improve the productivity and resilience of UK agriculture, but will food security be part of that as it is viewed by many as a public good that should be included?

TG – Government has made it clear that it does see an important role for UK food production. Food supply and how it should be treated as a public good would be raised this afternoon in the House of Commons.

BD – Was waiting to hear details about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and questioned whether the Fund would be placed with Defra or the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)? She emphasised the need for continued support for all types of rural business post-Brexit.

TG – The sponsoring ministries for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund were MHCLG and the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) but Defra was closely involved and would be pressing the case for rural needs to be recognised. A consultation on UKSPF would be undertaken in the near future.

PS – We needed to increase ambition on 4G and 5G roll out to cover all premises. This would have a huge impact in rural areas and needed to be prioritised more by Government.

TG – Confirmed this was a target by 2033.

5 ERP Update

Nick Shuttleworth, Executive Director, RCCE

NS provided an update covering three particular matters:

Essex Rural Strategy Progress Report 2017/18

A report had been produced summarising progress made in delivering the Essex Rural Strategy in 2017/18. This included developments in each of the 10 priority themes and illustrated ERP's current links with other strategic partners. It also examined emerging issues, highlighting four – Brexit, large-scale strategic development, loneliness and social isolation and rural crime which the Strategic Board had identified as particular priorities for the coming year. NS thanked the priority leads for their help in compiling the report. Copies were made available to delegates and would be circulated to all ERP members.

Defra Rural & Farming Network

NS reminded members that ERP was one of 17 local/regional networks that collectively comprised Defra's Rural & Farming Network. This provided an opportunity to meet with and question Defra ministers and senior civil servants. Defra had initiated a review of the Rural & Farming Network system. ERP had submitted a response, advocating at least two national meetings p.a. and the revival of ministerial visits to RFN members.

Fly Tip Task & Finish Group

NS reported that responsibility for the Group had been transferred to the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) which would enable it to function on a longer-term basis. He thanked Adam Scott and Suzanne Harris for the work they had done for ERP in raising the profile of this issue.

NS reported additionally that the Strategic Board was proposing two full partnership meetings and three Strategic Board meetings in 2019, exactly as this year. Dates to be agreed asap. This was endorsed.

6 Country Trust – Where Children Learn and Grow

Jill Attenborough, CEO, Country Trust

Please see full powerpoint presentation on [ERP website](#)

JA shared the Country Trusts vision: 'Every child understands farming, the countryside, and how our food is produced through high quality learning experiences'.

She described its work as a small, dynamic national education charity dedicated to bringing alive the working countryside for children least able to access it. Since 1978 The Country Trust had been making it possible for hundreds of volunteer farmers and landowners to welcome thousands of disadvantaged young children from all backgrounds and faiths onto their farms to share their passion for food, farming and the countryside. The trust helps children grow in three ways: Day visits to real working farms, residential visits to the countryside and year-long programmes exploring every aspect of growing, cooking and even selling food.

Disadvantaged children are the Trust's priority. It was suggested if the scout and other 'uniformed' groups could be involved. JA agreed this was an area to explore.

7 Essex Police – Gypsy, Traveller and Rural Engagement Team (GTRET)

PC Andy Long, GTRET, Essex Police – Please see full powerpoint presentation on [ERP website](#)

PC Long reported that a firm and fair approach to the removal of unauthorised encampments had resulted in a reduced number of incidences. Essex Police (EP) officers are fully aware of section 61 which is used when authorised. PC Long made members aware of an increased number of caravan thefts, where storage areas are commonly targeted.

PC Long also highlighted increased incidences of hare coursing in the county and emphasised the importance of reporting all rural crime.

Responding to a question, he commented that there had been a 25% reduction of unauthorised encampments in the county thanks to the work of GTRET. The people involved were treated fairly and as equals and welfare is a priority for the team especially when children are involved.

PC Long emphasised that Twitter is a good resource for seeing what GRET is doing and is always updated on a regular basis.

In answer to a question regarding ANPR cameras to be set up via a Parish Council, he confirmed this would need to be agreed by highways. To link a system with EP then the person would need to speak to Adam Pipe at Police Headquarters.

PC Long concluded by publicising the Rural Crime Awareness Day on 14th November, starting at 10am and open to the public.

A flow chart re section 61 would be circulated - **TO ACTION AL – completed**

8 Update on Funding Programmes

- LEADER – Beverly Davies, Essex Rivers Programme Manager, Rural Community Council of Essex

BD provided an update - please see full powerpoint presentation on [ERP website](#)

She highlighted recent successes in funding projects and creating new jobs. The deadline for full applications was 14th December and the last scheduled Local Action Group meeting would take place in March 2019.

- Local Services Fund – Joy Darby, CEO, Essex Association of Local Councils

JD illustrated the continued success of the fund in supporting local community initiatives initiated either by Parish and Town Councils or formally constituted community groups.

As a revenue fund it was able to pay salaries related to the delivery of a new service. The grants available are up to £10,000 per bid or £15,000 over 3 years which can be paid up front. There is an expectation of matched funding.

A total of £254,587 had been distributed since December 2017. The closing date for applications was 25th October.

Further information was obtainable from Louise Gambardella – EALC Funding Officer on: 01371 879722 or email louise.gambardella@ealc.gov.uk.

9 A.O.B.

None

Appendix

Attendees:

Title	Name	Surname	Organisation	Initials
Ms	Paula	Booth	Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Partnership	PB
Ms	Jill	Attenborough	The Country Trust	JA
Ms	Michelle	Bennett	Age UK Essex	MB
Ms	Lisa	Bone	Visit Essex	LB
Mr	Simon	Brice	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)	SB
Ms	Joy	Darby	Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)	JD
Cllr	Peter	Davey	Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)	PD
Mr	Robert	Davidson	Essex Rivers LAG	RD
Ms	Beverly	Davies	RCCE - Essex Rivers	BD
Mr	Ken	Edwards	Galleywood Good Neighbours	KE
Mr	Craig	Elliott	Essex County Council	CE
Mr	Oliver	Everott	Essex Fire	OE
Mr	Tim	Goodship	Defra	TG
Mr	Neil	Harper	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)	NH
Mr	Tim	Hayward-Smith	CDA Herts	TH
Mr	Roger	Hirst	Police and Crime Commissioner	RH
Mr	David	Knight	CPREssex	DK
Ms	Sue	Lissimore	Essex County Council	SL
Pc	Andrew	Long	Essex Police	AL
Revd	Janet	Nicholls	Diocese of Chelmsford	JN
Mr	Chris	Philpot	Barleylands Farm Museum & Visitors Centre	CP
Ms	Elizabeth	Rose	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)	ER
Ms	Chris	Rust	Maldon District Council	CR
Mr	Nick	Sandford	The Woodland Trust	NS
Cllr	Peter	Schwier	Braintree District Council	PS
Mr	Adam	Scott	National Farmers Union	AS
Mr	Nick	Shuttleworth	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)	NS
Mr	William	Sunnucks	CLA	WS
Cllr	Simon	Walsh	Essex County Council	SW
Mr	Philip	Wilson	Farming Community Network	PW
Mr	Neil	Jarvis	Forestry Commission England	NJ

Apologies:

Mrs	Rosemary	Alexander	Farming Community Network
Ms	Sharon	Alexander	Tendring CVS
Ms	Lindsey	Allen	Forestry Commission
Mr	Simon	Amstutz	Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Partnership
Revd Canon	John	Brown	Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)
Mr	Anthony	Buston	Essex County Council
Ms	Sue	Carter	Royal Horticultural Society
Ms	Paula	Chapman	Rochford District Council
Mr	Keith	Davis	Farming Community Network
Sgt	Paul	Downes	Essex Police
Ms	Lianne	Edwards	Engagement and Communications
Cllr	John	Freeman	Uttlesford District Council (Essex Districts)
Insp	Ian	Gennery	Essex Police
Mr	Andrew	James	Essex County Council
Mr	Ian	Le Gros	Royal Horticultural Society
Ms	Victoria	Marzouki	Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Service
Ms	Cheryl	Milton-White	Rochford District Council
Mr	Michael	Minta	Diocese of Chelmsford
Rt Revd	Roger	Morris	Diocese of Chelmsford
Ms	Tricia	Moxey	CPREssex
Mrs	Rosemary	Padfield	National Farmers Union
Mr	David	Sollis	Healthwatch
Mrs	Trisha	Staerck	Essex Police
Ms	Caroline	Taylor	Essex Community Foundation