



STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th March 2008

10.00am, RCCE Offices Feering

Present:

Chair – Cllr. John Jowers – ECC (JJ)	Joy Sheppard–EALC (JS) EALC - CAG
Vice Chair – John Brown (JB)	Terry Taber – FSB (TT) EconAG
Kirsty Monk (KM) (minutes)	John Hall– EWT (JH) EnvAG
Nick Shuttleworth – RCCE (NS) (RCCE)	Cllr. Peter Baggott - EALC (PB) EnvAG
Philip Wilson – ECC (PW) (ECC)	Cllr. Wendy Scattergood – ELGA (WS)
Kate Croft ECC Essex Partnership Manager (KC) (invited guest)	Cllr. Mick Page – EERF (MP)
Judy Gray Personal Facilitator to Essex Partnership Manager (JG) (invited guest)	Richard Woolley – RCCE (RW) EERF
Suzanne Roast - RCCE (SR) CAG (/ EERF)	Cllr. John Buchanan EALC – EERF

Apologies:

Chris Allen –EEDA (CA)	Dianne Hardy – Haven Gateway (EconAG)
Sandy Cruickshank -Go East (SC)	Peter Chillingworth- (PC) ELGA
Ed Gregory- ECC (EG)	

Vice Chairman Canon John Brown welcomed all to the meeting.

Action By

Apologies were read.

Minutes of the previous Steering Group meeting, 16th January 2008 & matters arising.

1

No matters of accuracy were raised

Those present agreed the minutes.

The following were reported as updates/ matters arising from those minutes:

John Yates

A formal invitation to John Yates, Chair of the East of England Rural Forum (EERF) to

speak at the next ERP full partnership meeting and attend the Steering group Meeting on the 18th June 2008 (Best Western Hotel - Marks Tey, Colchester,) has been made and accepted.

EEDA –

Chris Allen is to return to his EEDA rural duties from 01/04/08

Action- SR/KM to facilitate the invitation EEDA representative at next ERP full meeting; hopefully Chris Allen, but if not an alternative representative.

Dianne Hardy

SR reported that Dianne Hardy (previously representing ExDRA) has now changed jobs and is working for Haven Gateway.

SR/TT

Action:

Clarify if Dianne Hardy wishes to continue her representation in the relevant ERP Action Groups (SG and EconAG)

Further matters arising were dealt with by the main agenda items.

2 Update from the East of England Regional Forum

EERF:

SR reported that the EERF were current looking at their strategies work; the Regional Forum wished to look at ways of influencing East of England strategies and identify an action plan and list of priority strategies. Ten key strategies were reviewed during this meeting and this had highlighted how much work there was yet to be done.

The June EERF meeting would look at economic growth, inward investment, social inclusion, land use and local food. The EERF AGM was scheduled to be held on 12th March 2008.

Cutting Costs at the EERF

SR reported that due to cut backs in the EERF service level agreement, they were looking at ways to reduce costs. Currently the secretariat is based at a Government office, but they are looking at reassigning this role externally and saving money by out sourcing it. The EERF have also switched their meetings already to community buildings and have saved a considerable amount of money by doing this.

The Chairman, Cllr John Jowers joined the meeting at this time.

3 Review of Local Area Agreement 2

Discussion with Kate Croft Essex Partnership Manager

LAA2 Draft Review.

Kate Croft explained her role as part of the LAA2 team and reviewed the current indicators and targets for the most recent draft LAA (2) with the Steering Group. The consultation period with stakeholders would be ongoing until 28th March 2008. Evidence of need and relevant research would be accepted at a later date in Autumn 2008.

ALL

Urgent Action:

Individual ERP Organisations to submit responses to the LAA2 draft document (deadline close of business 28th March 2008)

Please see a copy of the indicators kindly circulated by Kate Croft (attached - appendix 1) for further details.

SR advised that herself Ed Gregory (ECC), Philip Wilson (ECC) would be meeting shortly with Kevin Nunn, regarding access to services, affordable housing and rural proofing as they are considered the current draft does not include specific indicators for these elements

The following concerns and actions highlighted by the Steering Group regarding

targets not in the LAA2:

- **Housing Targets** – affordable and social housing should be included and profile raised.
- **Access to Services** to essential and key services with aim to increase the access and availability.
- **Rural Proofing** needs to be carried out on identified indicators in the LAA2.
- **Environmental indicators**- highlight their cross cutting importance across the LAA2

Action

The Steering Group discussed priority 10 regarding LAA2 environmental indicators – John Hall (EWT) and Joy Sheppard (EALC) to liaise regarding local site delivery assisted by Parish and Town Councils.

JH JS

A copy of John Hall's document regarding environmental priority 10 was distributed to the group

- **Rural Employment/** 16-18 year olds indicators – regarding the creation of greater number of blue collar employment opportunities based on vocational qualifications.
- **Volunteers** - concern regarding the LAA providing a true reflection of the input of non registered volunteers in rural areas. Joy Sheppard (EALC) offered to supply volunteer data accrued from Parish Clerks and Nick Shuttleworth (RCCE) advised that similar data could be gathered regarding Village hall committees. Also that paid and unpaid volunteers should be recognised.
- **Indicator 195 –fly tipping** in rural areas
- **VAT registration** – how to identify businesses in rural communities below the VAT threshold as many rural businesses sit comfortably below this threshold.

JS/NS

The Essex Partnership Contact details for information.

Partnership Forum

For further information regarding LAA2 email info@essexpartnership.org or call Kate Crofts, Essex Partnership Manager on 01245 437552.

4 RSCP (Rural Social and Community Programme Update)

SR reported that RCCE were continuing to look a ways to replace the funding for at least some of the former RSCP projects, since the cessation of RSCP funding in March 2008.

Community Planning Fund

Has allocated its resources for 07/08 and at present would not be able to fund any further community led planning projects.

JS advised that due to the loss of RSCP funding the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) was facing a £40,000 shortfall in funding next year.

5 liC Business Plan Update

SR advised that the funding for the Remote Rural Access point and Rural Retail Advisor had definitely been withdrawn by liC due to an extensive cut in their budgets.

Rural Retail Advisor – SR to update on funding from alternative sources at next meeting.

6 Market Towns Suzanne Roast (RCCE) to Liaise with Joy Sheppard (EALC) regarding a new promotional event for Market Towns Partnerships. This was being worked on by the Economic Action Group.

7 Post Office Closures Update

Further Post Office Closures

SR advised that 2 further post offices (that had recently been undergoing the public consultation process) Henham and Little Bentley, were due to close in June 2008. The South Essex Area Plan (proposed post office closures in the southern area of the County) is due to be announced on 17th June 2008.

ECC Negotiations

Essex County Council are currently in negotiations with Post Office Limited (POL) and had offered 1.5 million over the next 3 years to help reopen at least some of those post offices that have been closed and help them to become self sustaining in the future.

There had been some hurdles to overcome, notably the possibility that if ECC funds Sub Post Offices (regarded as a private enterprise), they could be seen to be in breach of EU regulations. However this obstacle was to be surmounted by ECC funding not only the post office element but ensuring the reopened centre offered other community benefits such as a shop and information hub.

Nationwide Interest

Essex was the focus of National attention and political debate as ECC was the only Local Authority in talks with POL in the UK and Essex is considered a "test case". The ERP website and Rural Net services have had questions from around the country on how we have tackled the Public Consultation in Essex.

8 Next ERP and Steering Group Meeting

Themes:

- EERF – John Yates, Overview and Question Time
- Inward Investment
- Regional Assembly – a change is coming

ERP Future Venues

Action

The Steering Group suggested a community building venue in line with EERF policy of reducing costs.

9 Cont'd Actions:

Barbara Follet MP – Minister for the East of England (SR/KM/JJ/PW)

- Make contact and invite her to Essex
- Suggested either a tour of Essex or a trip to an Essex event

Steering Group review of joint working practices of the 3 ERP action Groups

- Facilitation of joint working on cross cutting elements of the Essex Rural Strategy action plan (ERS AP).in order to progress actions- all
- Steering Group Review of the Priorities of the ERS AP action Plan (late 2008); after regional political structure has stabilised

Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) planning event for Members

- SR to liaise with Keith Blackburn re arranging a secondary event with the EPOA for members, Chairman and Vice chairs – if possible

7 Date of Next Meeting

The next Steering Group Meeting is due to be held at 2.00pm, 18th June 2008 after the ERP full partnership meeting (ERP Full Partnership Meeting, Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester, 9.30 am Registration and Refreshments, Meeting 10.00am - 1.15pm, Lunch 1.15 – 2.00pm, Steering Group Meeting Commences 2.00pm)

Meeting concluded 12.10 pm

LAA2 Indicators Appendix 1

LAA baselines and targets singled out specifically for rural/neighbourhood proofing

Priority 1

NI 117 - %16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training and employment (NEET)

Priority 2

NI 134 The number of emergency bed days per head of weighted population

NI135 Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service or advice and information

NI 139 People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently

NI 141 Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living

Priority 3

NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6

NI 60 Core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement

NI 112 Under 18 conception rate

NI 120 All-age cause mortality rate

NI 123 16+ current smoking rate prevalence

NI 150 Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment

Priority 5

NI 198 Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used

Priority 6

NI 6 Participation in regular volunteering

NI 8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation (local indicator)

NI 11 Engagement in the arts

Priority 7

NI 17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour

NI 195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting)

LI4 Fear of Crime

Priority 8

NI163 Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher – 2 year average

NI 164 Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher – 2 year average

NI 165 Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 or higher – 2 year average

NI 166 Average weekly earnings of employees in the area (workplace) – 2 year average

NI 171 VAT Registration Rate – 3 year average

Steering Group Composition Appendix 2

Name	Representing on ERP	Organisation
Cllr John Jowers	Ex-officio (ERP Chair)	ECC
Revd Canon John Brown	Ex-officio (ERP Vice Chair)	RCCE / Church of England
Nick Shuttleworth / Kirsty Monk	Ex-officio (admin/mgt)	RCCE
Philip Wilson / Ed Gregory	Ex-officio (admin/mgt)	ECC
Suzanne Roast	Community Action Group	RCCE
Joy Sheppard	Community Action Group	EALC
Dianne Hardy	Economic Action Group	ExDRA
Terry Tabor	Economic Action Group	Federation of Small Businesses
Peter Baggott	Environment Action Group	EALC
John Hall	Environment Action Group / EERF	Essex Wildlife Trust
Cllr Wendy Scattergood	ELGA	Braintree DC
Peter Chillingworth	ELGA	Colchester Borough Council
Cllr Mick Page	EERF	Tendring DC
Cllr John Buchanan	EERF	EALC
Richard Woolley	EERF	RCCE
Chris Allen	Non-voting attendee	EEDA
Sandy Cruickshank	Non-voting attendee	GO-East

Key

EALC
Essex Association of
Local Councils

ECC
Essex County
Council

EEDA
East of England
Development Agency

EERF
East of England
Rural Forum

ELGA
Essex Local
Government
Association

RCCE
Rural Community
Council of Essex