



Essex Rural Partnership

STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th October 2008

2.10 pm Blackwater Sailing Club, Heybridge Basin

Present:

Chair – Cllr. John Jowers	ECC (JJ)	Cllr. Peter Baggott	EnvAG (<i>EALC</i>) (PB)
Vice Chair – Canon John Brown	(JB)	Terry Taber	EconAG (<i>FSB</i>) (TT)
Cllr. John Buchanan	EERF (<i>EALC</i>) (JBU)	In Attendance	
Cllr. Mick Page	EERF (<i>ELGA</i>) (MP)	Stuart Crowgey	Go East (SC)
John Hall	EnvAG (<i>EWT</i>) (JH)	Kirsty Monk(minutes)	RCCE (KM)
Peter Chillingworth	ELGA (PC)		
Philip Wilson	ECC (PW)		
Suzanne Harris	CAG (<i>RCCE</i>) EERF (SH)		

Apologies:

Dianne Hardy	EconAG (<i>Haven Gateway</i>) (DH)	Chris Allen	EEDA (CA)
Richard Woolley	EERF (<i>RCCE</i>) (RW)	Joy Sheppard–EALC (JS)	CAG (<i>EALC</i>) (JS)
Ed Gregory	ECC (EG)	Nick Shuttleworth	RCCE (NS)
Cllr. Wendy Scattergood	ELGA (WS)		

Welcome and Introductions**Action By**

Chairman Cllr John Jowers welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies were taken as read**Minutes of the previous Steering Group meeting, 21st August 2008 & matters arising.**

- 1 No matters of accuracy were raised

Those present agreed the minutes.

Matters Arising were dealt with in the main agenda items.

Natural England ERP Attendance Future meetings.

JJ felt that although the update from Chris Gibson regarding Natural England was useful, that it highlighted the need to invite Natural England to attend a future Partnership meeting in order to devote greater time to questions and discussions.

KM reported that Dr Gibson had advised at the earlier meeting that, due to the restructure at Natural England, current resources may not support regular attendance by his organisation.

JJ expressed his concern and felt that Natural England representation on the ERP was needed, especially at this crucial time in the formation of Local Development Frameworks and the Regional Spatial Strategy and during the process of refreshing the Essex Rural Strategy.

KM/ SR

JJ also explained that the Marine Bill was currently due to be read and this would be of key importance to coastal areas in Essex

KM/PhW

Action: Invitation to Natural England to attend a future Full ERP Partnership Meeting in order to expand on issues raised at today's Partnership meeting and be able to discuss rural issues in greater detail.

Action: KM to liaise with PhW regarding the circulation of the Marine Bill and circulate to the ERP Group

NB: Key areas covered by the marine bill

Among the many subjects covered by the marine bill, these are the key areas of interest; Marine Management Organisation

- Marine Planning
- Marine Licensing
- Marine Nature Conservation
- Fisheries Management and Marine Enforcement
- Environmental Data and Information
- Migratory and Freshwater Fisheries
- Coastal Access
- Coastal and Estuary Management

2 Discussion of the Key Priorities of the ERP Essex Rural Strategy:

JJ felt that the earlier workshop and responses from ERP members had been useful and would feed into the Strategy refresh process.

The Steering group reviewed member responses which identified key rural priorities. A group discussion followed which determined the following outcomes:

- That the revised strategy should incorporate a **5 year rural plan** for Essex which was deliverable in the short term and also outline **10 to 20 year aspirational objectives** for Rural Essex.
- That there was an optimum size of rural settlement which facilitated community viability in rural areas and that this should be investigated further.
- That the ERP Action Groups are involved in determining their individual relevant action plans once the Strategy has been revised.
- That further wider consultation would be carried out to help inform the refresh process (to be agreed by the ERP Steering Group).
- That the current Essex Rural Strategy needed to be refined to produce key priorities which could be delivered and were achievable; these priorities should meet the ERP Partnership vision and essential criteria of creating an environmentally and economically sustainable future for Rural Essex.

6 Key Priorities for Rural Essex To help achieve Community Viability (for discussion with the Rural Commission):

1. Affordable Housing
2. Support for rural enterprise and a strengthened rural economy
 - for small business security and for local employment opportunities
3. Access to essential services
4. Community well-being, incorporating community voice and empowerment
5. Land issues
 - Accessible green space for all
 - Management of rural/agricultural land
6. Planning influence, incorporating housing, transport and business

Action: KM to create PowerPoint presentation for the Rural Commission on 4th November and circulate to ERP Steering Group. Once approved forward to PhW in time for the joint meeting.

KM/PhW

3 Rural Commission Update:

PhW reported that Prof. Jules Pretty had taken over Chairmanship of the Rural Commission as Elinor Goodman had stepped down; Elinor will continue as one of the Commission members.

PhW advised that the format for the meeting on the 4th November was proposed to be a discussion of key priorities for Rural Essex with ERP Members followed by lunch.

PhW also advised that a number of Rural Commission meetings on individual rural issues were to be set up and experts invited to the meetings. There was also an opportunity for all individual partnership organizations to participate in the call for evidence on line.

KM/SH/

PHW

Action: PhW to circulate Rural Commission meeting invitation and agenda to ERP membership via KM/SH

4 Date of Next Meeting

Action:

Steering Group Meeting 8th December 08, RCCE Offices, Feering, 10am to 12 pm.

KM

Meeting concluded 3.45 pm