



STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st November 2007

10.00 am RCCE Offices, Feering

Present:

Chair - Cllr. John Jowers – ECC (JJ) Vice Chair – John Brown (JB)
Joy Sheppard- EALC (JS) Philip Wilson – ECC (PW)
Nick Shuttleworth – RCCE (NS)
Peter Chillingworth- (PC)
Suzanne Roast - RCCE (SR)
Minutes -Kirsty Monk (KM)

Apologies:

Chris Allen –EEDA (CA) Gemma Driscoll ECC - (GD)
Sandy Cruickshank -Go East (SC) Ed Gregory- ECC (EG)
John Hall– EWT (JH) Peter Baggott - EALC (PB)
Dianne Hardy – Exdra (DH) Richard Woolley – RCCE (RW)
Keith Blackburn ECC – (KB) Wendy Scattergood – ELGA (WS)
Mick Page – EERF (MP) Terry Taber – FSB (TT)

The Chairman Cllr. John Jowers welcomed all to the meeting and explained that many attendees had been delayed or prevented from attending due to an accident on the A12 that morning. It was decided by those assembled to proceed with a brief meeting and cover the items on the agenda that could be covered and pass those remaining items on to the next meeting (16th January 2008) which could not be addressed currently. Action By

1 Minutes of the previous Steering Group meeting, 12th September 2007 & matters arising.

No matters of accuracy were raised

Those present agreed the minutes.

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

NS advised the Group that Suzanne Roast (RCCE) would be attending the next East of England Rural Forum (EERF) as the new ERP representative on 12th December 2007 and would report back at the next meeting.

Item 1 Meeting Attendance

JS requested that John Buchanan (EALC) be invited to the next Steering Group meeting (16th January 2008)

KM SR

The Group felt that it was important that John Yates (Chair of the EERF) should be invited to the next full partnership or Steering Group Meeting.

Action – please see item 3 for details.

Further matters arising were covered in the main agenda items

2 RSCP (Rural Social and Community Programme Update-standing Item)

Copies of the EALC (RSCP) report and the RCCE RSCP project report regarding the Community Planning fund were circulated to the group (please see copy attached for full details).

NS: Advised the Group that the RSCP funding also supports the Rural Housing Enabler, Transport and Access Advisor, ERP support and partially funds the work of the RCCE field officers.

JS explained that it was vital that these projects continued to run and that the future funding outlook for them did not look promising as DCLG and Defra funding was due to be withdrawn at the end of the current financial year.

NS felt that the current £230,000 RSCP funding had been effectively used giving funding to a wide and essential range of rural services and the LAA needed to recognise the amount of rural work which will no longer be supported after March 2008.

Action: Steering Group determined to formulate a letter on behalf of the ERP express their concern that these vital project may not be funded next year and that possibility of LAA reward grant funding be investigated.

3 Key Action Points of ERP Steering Group Meeting 21st November 2007:

The Group then discussed their key future actions required by the Steering Group as follows:

EERF

- Invite John Yates (East of England Regional Forum Chairman) to the next ERP Steering Group & full membership meeting - SR/KM
- Feedback given from the EERF meeting, (12th December 2007) (SR/MP/RW)

Farming

- Invite Simon B to attend ERP full membership meeting (SR/KM) and develop farming membership.

EEDA and ERP Liaison

- Liaison with EEDA developed - Invite key EEDA representative to the meeting on 16th Jan 2008 (SR/KM)

Prepare the ERP response to the Rural Economic Strategy noting the following points(SR/PW) :

- Deficiency in the address of “Rurality”.
 - No spatial identity – sense of place
 - Lack of distinctive regional identity in the RES
 - Need to identify the distinctiveness of the Eastern Region, both Urban and Rural and ways in which the 2 interact or don’t interact.
 - It doesn’t focus on small or medium size businesses, which are the economic cornerstone of communities.
 - The RES focuses on academic attainment and skills it does not look at entrepreneurs and manual skills/ training.
 - The importance and role of market towns emphasised.
 - Need greater clarity with regard to the necessary differences between seasonal work (often employing Migrant Workers) and full time practical manual professions.
- Circulation of the ECC response to the RES to Joy Sheppard / Steering Group (PW)

ERP Input to the LAA - development.

- ERP Strategy revised and used to offer guidance, influence and inform the Local Development Frameworks, Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Plans, giving essential rural input. (Steering Group/ Full Membership/ SR)

East of England Regional Minister

- ERP to Develop a working relationship with Barbara Follet MP, East of England Regional Minister (SR/JJ)

RSCP Projects

- Lobbying Letter regarding the necessity continuing funding for RSCP projects in Essex (SR) and investigating other sources of funding.
- Contact Richard Wilson (ECC) regarding the quicker release of RSCP project monies (PW)

ERP Membership

- ERP Membership list to be revised, key organisations identified and circulated to Steering Group for reflection and suggestions (SR)
- JB Meeting with Hazel Blears Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Post Offices

- Update on the Post Office Public and Consultation and Review at next ERP full meeting
- Publicity for new online RuralNet expert Rural Service by:
 - ECC - Essex Matters - (PW/SR)
 - EALC (SR/JS)

4 Date of Next Meeting

The Date of the next steering group meeting was agreed to be held on 16th January 2008, Reid Rooms, Marks Hall, Margaret Roding, Essex CM6 1QT -ERP Steering Group Meeting commences 2.00pm (ERP full partnership meeting am - arrival 9.30am registration and refreshments 10.00am start. Buffet Lunch 1.15pm followed by the Steering Group - 2.00 pm).

Meeting concluded 12.40pm