



Economic Action Group

RCCE, Threshelfords, Feering

4th April 2008

MINUTES

Present:

Andrew Fieldsend
Keith Hughes

Suzanne Roast (notes)
Terry Taber

Paul Williams
Philip Wilson (Chair)

1. Apologies

Chris Allen
Ed Gregory

Dominic Petre
Pat Roberts

Phil Smith

2. Notes of last meeting

Approved.

3. Rural jobs project – presentation by Andrew Fieldsend

Andrew Fieldsend presented to the group on the purpose of the project and sought answers to a number of questions. AF made own detailed notes.

Plymouth University as the UK lead on this project – working with Hungary, Romania, Lithuania, France, Spain, Italy and Belgium.

Economic Action Group role is to act as a 'critical friend'.

Project to last for 2½ years, commencing 1st February 2008.

Research to look at what is meant by rural development, identify problems and examine current status (who, what, strategies, funding, etc)

4. Action Plan-

Rural Shops

Report by Elizabeth Thorogood now ready to publish. liC had confirmed that, due to funding cuts imposed by EEDA, it would not be possible to fund the project for an advisor from the liC budget 2008-9. ECC had indicated that funding may be available.

Social Enterprises

Keith Hughes circulated some information about Social Enterprises. SR agreed to pass on to Langford.

Funding

Two projects were being prepared to bid for Leader money.

- Coastal bid: this had not been submitted due to various difficulties encountered.

- Eastern plateau: Uttlesford, North Herts & East Herts: land based project to lower carbon footprint of rural businesses.

Philip Wilson and Suzanne Roast to meet to discuss the ECC Rural Economic budget.

Planning and diversification

A paper had been presented to the EPOA Chief Officers Group, but they had not agreed to adopt it. A final revised draft would be considered at a meeting next week.

A seminar had taken place for Development Control Officers and a Conference for Farmers – both had been well received.

Rural crime

It was agreed that Police contact should be made – Wyn Bernard or Roger Baker would be approached and invited to a meeting. This would be first discussed in November; additional guests would be invited to a second meeting.

Market towns

Sally Williams would be running a 'Dragons Den' style event at Wisbech.

Sally had attended a meeting in Essex to discuss Market Town Partnerships in March; it was hoped to stage an event for interested parties later in the year.

Bruce (Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow & Thaxted) had had some time off, but it was hoped he would be returning shortly.

Migrant workers

Various barriers to assisting were identified. Because they tend to keep moving on reactions to needs are often too late; it is easier to work to deliver through gang masters.

It was noted that the ESF funding referred to in previous minutes related to an old funding stream.

LSC & Job Centre + would be holding a conference in September.

Signage

It was agreed to invite the Head of Tourism to a meeting to discuss use of brown signs.

Sustainable construction

It was agreed to invite CITB to a future meeting. It was also agreed that a visit to the sustainable building established by Adnams could prove useful.

5. AOB

There was none.

6. Date of next meeting

Friday 23rd May 2008

Coffee from 9.30am; meeting to commence at 10.00am