

**County Durham Economic Partnership
Rural Advisory Group
19 July 2007, 9.30am
The Greenhouse, Greencroft Industrial Estate**

1. Attendees:

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Phil Hughes (Chair) | Ignite |
| John Banks (Secretariat) | County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP) |
| Joanne Willey (Secretariat) | CDEP |
| Mike Richardson | Wear Valley District Council (WVDC) |
| Catherine Grezo | Durham County Council (DCC) |
| Kate Culverhouse | Groundwork |
| Ingo Schuder | Natural England |
| Keith Lamb | Government Office Northeast (GONE) |
| Joanna Laverick | Durham Rural Community Council (DRCC) |
| Louise White | National Farmers Union (NFU) |
| Angus Collingwood-Cameron | Country Land and Business Association (CLA) |

Apologies

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Christine Caine | Job Centre Plus (JCP) |
| Glynn Bateman | Natural England |
| Bob Hope | WVDC |

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting held on 24 May 2007 were agreed as a true record.

Matters Arising not covered on agenda:

- Copies of the Stanhope Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan were sent to Catherine Grezo and Steve Bhowmick.
- Figures for the old RDP remainder are still not available, there are still technical matters regarding final payments to be made. **Carried Forward.**

3. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

4. Draft RAG Work Programme

John Banks introduced the paper he had prepared as a result of a discussion that took place at the last meeting. He had developed a spreadsheet that took into account partner's ideas and also the Rural Advisory Group's (RAG) role as set out in the terms of reference. It was highlighted that this wasn't set in stone but was something for the RAG to consider, look at in detail and then take back to the Officer Delegated Group (ODG). As the full RAG didn't have all papers attached to this main spreadsheet, the Secretariat agreed to organise for copies to be sent by post or in another appropriate format.

ACTION:

Secretariat

Once received the RAG were asked to then consider how they could take the lead on items. Suggestions should be sent to the Secretariat (email joanne.willey@durham.gov.uk). Partners were also asked to contact the Secretariat and copy to Phil if they felt there were any gaps on the list (email: phil@greyscar.com). Phil would then take this workplan to the ODG to encourage them to make our priorities their priorities.

ACTION: All

John updated the RAG on the current County Durham Economic Strategy (CDES) situation. He had recently met with Chris Duffill (a consultant working on the CDES) to discuss the rural aspect. John then briefly highlighted an e-mail which he had sent to Chris developing the discussion and noting rural issues. He reported that the CDES has gone through a long process and work is still continuing. The next step for the RAG is to read the current draft and see how rural stands. John agreed to forward a copy of the draft CDES to the RAG and also a small note on other working group work plans.

ACTION: Secretariat

5. Rural Advisory Group Terms of Reference

Phil Hughes clarified that the RAG does not have any power to make funding decisions. The Board minute is misleading as none of the working groups have a role formally in approving projects. They should, however consider and recommend, with final approval resting with the ODG. Keith Lamb suggested that the terms of reference should be expanded to include the rural perspective on Regional and National activity. Phil Hughes agreed to propose this at the next ODG.

ACTION: Phil Hughes

6. Current County Durham Rural Programmes

Rural Development Programme England (RDPE)

The RDPE will contribute towards Defra's priorities of:

- Making agriculture and forestry more competitive and sustainable (Axis 1)
- Enhancing the environment and countryside (Axis 2)
- Enhancing opportunity in rural areas (Axis 3)
- The New LEADER approach (Axis 4) is cross-cutting across the programme priorities.

One NorthEast (ONE) has published a prospectus for the North East on the New LEADER Approach. This was circulated to the RAG. A discussion took place on how the new LEADER approach would be delivered. Clarification was needed and so it was suggested that it would be useful to have a representative from ONE to attend the next meeting. Questions to be asked included: When looking at gaps, which organisations would need to step in and help e.g. DRCC and how the commissioning approach will work in areas.

ACTION: Secretariat

Overall the RAG agreed that they supported the LEADER approach provided that the right amount of resource was available as well as match funding.

Angus Collingwood-Cameron expressed his concerns about funding for the 3 axis other than the new LEADER approach. Phil Hughes agreed to write to Francis Rowe at ONE with concerns that RDPE isn't just about LEADER and that there are other strands to it. It was also noted to mention the need for improving communication.

ACTION: Phil Hughes

West Durham Rural Pathfinder (WDRP)

Ingo Schuder gave a presentation on the WDRP. A copy of the presentation was circulated to the RAG. A discussion took place on how to continue the legacy once the WDRP ends in October.

Stanhope Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan (SRDAP)

John Banks informed the RAG of the SRDAP. In January 2007 CDEP Secretariat commissioned Miller Research Consulting to complete a retail distinctiveness study of Stanhope, the CDEP's second priority market town, in Weardale. The purpose was to build on the regional study that Miller Research completed for ONE NorthEast in 2006. The regional study sought to carry out action research into creating a more distinctive retail experience that would result in an improved contribution by market towns to the wider economic development agenda. Miller Research established a retail distinctiveness model through which each town's 'distinctiveness' could be measured. Their regional research for ONE NorthEast examined the three market towns of Barnard Castle, Guisborough and Alnwick.

Rural Social Community Programme (RSCP)

Joanna Laverick introduced this item and explained its purpose. The RSCP is a DEFRA funded programme designed to:

- Help rural communities work together to shape their own futures
- Improve opportunities for socially excluded people
- Strengthen the voluntary and community sector, and Town and Parish Councils giving them a stronger voice to champion the rural communities they serve

The RSCP is currently funded until March 2008, however they hope to extend their package of specialist support across County Durham in the future, subject to funding, however there is no guarantee that funding will continue for DRCC.

Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI)

John Banks introduced this item. Following the evaluation of the Settlement Renewal Initiative (SRI) and Market Town Initiative (MTI) which stated that the SRI was good value for money, the CDEP commissioned EKOS consultants to undertake a study to recommend a number of settlements in County Durham for support under the CEDI (successor to the SRI). A longlist was put

together of possible settlements which EKOS then revised to a shortlist of candidates. The successful settlements are:

- Bowburn
- Annfield Plain and New Kyo
- Shotton

John agreed to circulate the report by EKOS and the 2 lists of possible settlements.

ACTION: Secretariat

Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative

Catherine Grezo introduced this item and explained that it was DCC's response to the Urban Rural White Paper. She circulated a copy of the Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative Progress Report 2005-06 and newsletter produced by the DCC team.

Groundwork

Kate Culverhouse informed the RAG that she planned to build an eco-building on the same site as the greenhouse for use as a conference centre and to be used for training and education. Kate agreed to send the secretariat a list of other Groundwork projects to circulate to the RAG.

ACTION: Kate Culverhouse

7. Strategic Projects

The RAG was asked to read the update on the Eastgate and Barnard Castle Vision as circulated before the meeting at their own leisure.

8. Single Programme Projects – Current and In Development

The RAG was asked to read the Single Programme Projects update as circulated before the meeting at their own leisure and contact John Banks if they notice any errors.

ACTION: All

9. Any other Business

John reported that the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration had been published.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Friday 21 September 2007, Venue TBC