

EERF Steering Group

2.30 - 4.30pm, 12th June 2008

Ely Beet Sports and Social Club, Lynn Road, Ely, Cambs, CB6 1DD

Minutes

Attendees

Andrew Budden	Diana Bradley
Martin Collison	Stuart Crowgey
Graham Hedger	John Mullen
Rachel Payne (Cambs RAF)	Sarah Prentice (minutes)
Suzanne Roast	Lisa Roberts
John Yates (Chair)	

Apologies

Kate Belinis	Pat Holtom
Sarah Hughes	Sally Williams

1. Minutes of last meeting (19th May 2008)

The minutes were **agreed** as an accurate record of the meeting, with the following actions arising:

ACTION: Sarah Prentice to circulate Corinne Meakins' SNR briefing to the full EERF.

ACTION: John Yates to contact Kate Belinis regarding progress with writing to David Wood on ensuring that rural has been taken into account in the RSS.

ACTION: John Yates to contact Corinne Meakins about leading the EERF's input to the Environment Strategy and setting up a Task and Finish Group.

ACTION: Andrew Budden to report back at the next Steering Group meeting on progress, objectives and outcomes for the 'Social Inclusion' meeting taking place in December 2008.

2. Actions from EERF meeting

The workshop sessions on 'Positive Growth' were felt to have been productive. The EERF's aim was to produce a Position Paper and it was **agreed** that Martin Collison would put together a draft, based on the notes from the workshops, by 10th September.

The Position Paper will be used to feed into the consultation on the implementation of the SNR. It will also be sent to the Minister and to EEDA. In addition it will feed into the forthcoming EERF meetings on 'Inward Investment' and 'Social Inclusion' and so will be circulated to EERF Members, county Rural Forums (RAFs) and RCCs.

ACTION: Sarah Prentice and Diana Bradley to type up their notes from the workshop sessions and send them to Martin Collison by 20th June 2008.

ACTION: Martin Collison to draft a Position Paper on 'Positive Growth' by the end of June to feed into the SNR consultations 10th September 2008.

3. Objectives and Outcomes for EERF meeting 18th September

This agenda item was not covered, as neither Sally Williams nor Pat Holtom were able to attend the meeting.

ACTION: Sarah Prentice to contact Sally and Pat to obtain the objectives and outcomes for the 'Inward Investment' meeting. The objectives and outcomes will be circulated to the Steering Group for comment.

4. Budget 2008/09 (including Secretariat Services)

Lisa Roberts reported that the EERF's budget this financial year (2008/09) is £20k to run the EERF with a further £5k to deliver the RRDF's objectives. This is a substantial decrease from last year, meaning that the EERF needs to make cost savings and plan how it wants to use its budget. Using community venues for EERF and Steering Group meetings, rather than purpose built conference facilities, is part of this.

Lisa then set out the following budget plan:

- £500 for each of the remaining quarterly meetings (£1500 in total)
- £2000 for EERF Members' travel and subsistence (T&S)
- £1500 for website development and maintenance
- £500 for the Housing Sub-Group to finish the report from the EERF's conference. The Housing Sub-Group is the only one to request funding.
- £6000 to support the county RAFs (£1000 for each RAF)
- £400 to run Steering Group meetings if they need to take place between the quarterly EERF meetings
- £1000 contingency
- £2000 for the annual conference

This leaves approximately £9-9.5k in the EERF's budget.

Lisa is putting together guidance on how T&S should be claimed and the guidance will be circulated to the Steering Group.

Lisa advised the Group that, in terms of Secretariat support, GO-East is only able to provide the basic administrative support. It is not able to put in the extra work that it has done historically to develop agendas and drive activity. She is putting together a paper asking GO-East to provide some funding to part-fund a co-ordinator or organisation, for a period of one year, to get the EERF to a stage where it is self-sustaining. She suggested that the remaining £9-9.5k in the EERF's budget also be put towards this.

ACTION: Sarah Prentice to circulate the Service Level Agreement for Secretariat support to the Steering Group.

The Group **agreed** that the continuation of the county RAFs is very important and that building linkages between them and the EERF is crucial. Suzanne Roast and John Mullen reported that some of the county councils already provide support to their county RAF so it was **agreed** that a letter would be sent to each county council regarding the EERF's funding for the county RAFs and posing some questions.

ACTION: John Yates to draft a letter to the county RAFs about the EERF allocating some of its funding to each RAF and posing some questions. The draft letter will be circulated to the Steering Group for comment.

The Steering Group **agreed** the budget proposal and that it will be reviewed at the mid-year stage.

5. Review of the Sub-Groups

A discussion took place about the Sub-Groups, including their roles and whether they should continue. The following points were made:

- Learning and Skills: the Sub-Group has a clear agenda. It does not need any funding from the EERF budget as EEDA under-writes its work.
- Housing: the Sub-Group continues to have a role to play. Graham Hedger reported that the Sub-Group might want to revisit and revise its Terms of Reference. There is currently no cost implication for the EERF, however there is a question mark over Secretariat support to the Sub-Group which might have implications on costs.
- Market Towns East: the future of this Sub-Group was discussed in light of points raised by Sally Williams at the last Steering Group meeting. The Steering Group **agreed** that, rather than continuing as a Sub-Group to the EERF, Market Towns East would be reconvened as a separate Task and Finish Group as and when issues arise.
- SFFS Groups: it was **agreed** that the EERF needs a stronger relationship with the SFFS Groups.

ACTION: John Yates to contact Pat Holtom regarding Market Towns East.

6. Communication

Lisa proposed that the EERF website could be developed as a communications tool, which would allow communication to the whole EERF as well as others. It could potentially include a chat room and a blog, depending on the expertise of the web provider, which would facilitate communication between EERF meetings. The Steering Group needs to develop a brief for what it wants the website to do.

Suzanne Roast offered to investigate the web provider that has put together the Essex Rural Partnership / RCC website.

ACTION: Suzanne Roast to investigate the web provider that has put together the Essex Rural Partnership / RCC website and report back to the Steering Group by email.

ACTION: Lisa Roberts and Sally Williams to work together, with input from Suzanne Roast, to put together a brief for what the EERF website could look like.

It needs to be clear who the EERF wants to communicate with and how that communication will take place. Sarah advised the Steering Group that the EERF has an existing communication strategy which, while it is out of date, could form the basis of a new communication strategy.

ACTION: Sarah Prentice to circulate the existing EERF communication strategy to the Steering Group.

7. AOB

Sarah reminded the Steering Group to provide comments on the Annual Report template, as well as content for the Annual Report, to her by the end of June 2008.

ACTION: Sarah Prentice to circulate the Annual Report template to the Steering Group.

Sarah Prentice
Secretariat
17th June 2008