

**West Sussex Rural Partnership
Tuesday 28 June 2011, 2.00pm – 4.30pm
Billingshurst Community Centre, West Sussex**

Members Present	Cllr Pat Arculus Sandra Coley Sebastian Anstruther Chris Baister Tim Brock Cian Cronin Ana Fajardo Kenrick Garraway Sarah Hardman Romy Jones Clare Marett Hilary Knight Jeremy Leggett Paul Over Cllr Roger Paterson Alison Read Lindsey Simpson Peter Simpson	West Sussex County Council University of Chichester South Downs National Park Authority Horsham District Council Country Landowners Association Mid Sussex District Council West Sussex County Council Chichester District Council West Sussex County Council University of Chichester Department of Business Innovation & Skills Sussex Food and Drink Network Action in rural Sussex Chichester District Council Horsham District Council (Chairman) Chichester College Simpson Consultancy Ltd WSCC Leader Programme
In Attendance:	Simon Kiley	Action in rural Sussex (Minutes)
Members Apologies:	Ray Abrahams Cllr Ricky Bower Lisa Creaye-Griffin Cllr Miles Cullen John de Mierre Mike Smith Cllr Frank Wilkinson	Federation of Small Businesses Arun District Council West Sussex County Council Chichester District Council Mid Sussex District Council Natural England West Sussex County Council

Minutes

1.	Introductions and Apologies as above	Actions
2.	<p>Minutes of last meeting held on 22 March 2011 The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>Peter Simpson clarified that the budget cut highlighted under item 7a had been reinstated by Defra. In part this was due to the success of the programme in West Sussex where both areas had achieved a 50%+ spend compared to 28.5% nationally. The grants will hopefully return to the maximum of £25,000 in the Three Harbours and a Coastal Plain LAG and £37,000 in the Sussex Downs and Low Weald LAG once discussed by the LAG groups.</p> <p>Sebastian Anstruther also asked that under item 7a that the term Steering Committee be changed to Local Action Group.</p> <p>Hilary Knight clarified that item 7b should be named A Taste of Sussex and not the Taste of the South East. A request was also made to be added to the Rural Partnership mailing list.</p>	<p>SK to note and amend</p>
3.	<p>Items for discussion under Any Other Business</p> <p>No additional items were raised.</p>	

<p>4. a.</p>	<p>Social and Community Issues West Sussex Rural Forum Feedback – Jeremy Leggett</p>	
	<p>120 people attended the West Sussex Rural Forum event which was focused on Decentralisation and Localism. There was a shared sense of excitement and worry about elements of this agenda. This was also apparent in the East Sussex Rural Forum run on the same theme. Communities made clear that they wished to remain informed as the Bill progressed through Parliament and were keen to receive an update once more detail was known.</p> <p>An event was being held on Thursday 30th June at the University of Brighton to explore Neighbourhood Plans. This was being run jointly by Action in rural Sussex, the Sussex Associations of Local Councils and the university. Spaces were still available for those interested. It was clear that Neighbourhood Planning was likely to become an important issue for communities, local authorities and the South Downs National Park.</p> <p>Roger Paterson made clear that there was great potential to discuss Neighbourhood Plans and the support required to deliver them at future meetings.</p> <p>Sebastian Anstruther highlighted that the National Park was putting together its management plan and LDF simultaneously and it was likely to continue with business as usual until the issues surrounding Neighbourhood Planning became clearer. However, building capacity in communities and allowing them to work from the bottom-up was crucial.</p> <p>Pat Arculus commented that the needs of communities could be separated into planning issues on the one hand and services and self-help mechanisms on the other. It would be important to explore these with regard to how parishes themselves would like to move forwards and lead the agenda.</p> <p>Kenrick Garraway highlighted that communities possessed different skills sets and capacities to take things forward and that this needed to be considered and reflected in the approaches adopted. Paul Over made clear that Chichester District Council focused on using elected members as the primary conduit between communities and the local authority.</p> <p>Jeremy Leggett made clear that communities were being bombarded with numerous changes and multiple concepts and ideas currently and that they may struggle under the weight of these various initiatives. It is crucial that they are supported to understand these elements and maximise the opportunities they present.</p>	
<p>b.</p>	<p>West Sussex Co-operative - Jeremy Leggett</p> <p>The West Sussex Public Service Board which had previously been a stakeholder group brought together to set targets and monitor delivery for key organisations in the county. With the end of LAA2, this had been disbanded and replaced by the West Sussex Co-Operative which would also be made up of key stakeholders (WSSCC, NHS, Local Authorities etc.) but focus on a smaller number of significant priorities.</p> <p>One priority was ‘Think Family’ led by West Sussex County Council which seeks to address the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families in West Sussex and respond to their needs. However, there is a danger that the mechanisms used to identify these groups will follow the traditional Index of Multiple Deprivation mechanisms which is inherently biased towards urban concentrations of need, rather than reflecting the total level or nature of the needs.</p> <p>Rural proofing this approach and other similar mechanisms will be crucial to ensure that rural people are not overlooked by these schemes.</p>	<p>All – contribute input.</p> <p>JL to identify key rural priorities for next Co-Op meeting.</p>

	<p>A rural themed meeting of the Co-operative is planned for 7 September. Identifying key rural themes and the agenda for the meeting needs to be explored in order to get the appropriate messages across. Views on the issues and the approach to take in the meeting are requested of members.</p>	
<p>5.</p> <p>a.</p> <p>b.</p> <p>c.</p>	<p>Economic Issues</p> <p>Local Enterprise Partnership Update – Sarah Hardman The LEP Board had met on the 10 May and would next be meeting on the 30th June. Currently induction is occurring on various themes to bring members up to speed, this will include rural issues and the rural induction is currently scheduled for the 13th July.</p> <p>Discussions considered the most appropriate form for the rural induction to take. It was important to note that Alex Williamson, the Director of the Goodwood Estate had been identified as the rural lead on the board. The Rural Partnership would orchestrate both the nature of the induction and the venue and it was therefore up to members to decide how this should occur. The meeting was then opened up for ideas and suggestions to be put forward.</p> <p>Kenrick Garraway and Chris Baister highlighted that a list of economic priorities for the rural areas of the county had already been developed as part of the work undertaken by the economic development teams. These include: Skills and Employment, Broadband and Transport, Sites and premises, Market Towns, Routes to Market and Funding and Finance.</p> <p>Pat Arculus also made clear the need to consider the international connections between the county and other areas.</p> <p>West Sussex Broadband Update – Sarah Hardman A paper was distributed to update members on this issue.</p> <p>Rural Skills and Enterprise Action Plan – Lindsey Simpson Lindsey Simpson provided an overview to the proposal which had been distributed with the papers to implement some additional development work on skills and enterprise into the Market Towns of Arundel and Billingshurst. These aligned with the Rural Skills and Enterprise Action Plan developed by the Rural Skills sub-group.</p> <p>The proposal outlined the identified priorities in each location with the work in Arundel to focus on barriers to unemployment, understanding the local non-retail businesses and progression routes for young people. The work in Billingshurst would focus on developing a Unique Selling Point for the town, investigate opportunities for young people and engaging the business community.</p> <p>Both Kenrick Garraway and Paul Over raised concerns over various aspects of the proposal, including the relative narrow breadth of the project, the selection of Arundel and Billingshurst as the places in which development work is required and that existing models or templates for working appear to have been ignored.</p> <p>Other members also highlighted concerns regarding the narrow nature of the project and the methods which had been used to engage the communities as to the identification of the priorities which did appear to be rather top-down as opposed to developed in a bottom up manner.</p> <p>Ana Fajardo and Sarah Hardman clarified that this project had been developed as part of the Skills Action Plan, hence the relatively narrow breadth of the work and that the funding was part of an underspend, consequently, any broadening of the remit may require additional resources to be made available. Both Arundel and Billingshurst had been selected after considerable dialogue and groundwork.</p>	<p>KG to send economy list to JL.</p> <p>All to send priorities to JL</p> <p>AF/SH to develop proposal for next meeting.</p>

	<p>Pat Arculus raised concerns as to why it had been restricted to Market Towns and in particular why Arundel and Billingshurst. Similarly, the project did not appear to be a pilot as it was not delivering in a particularly new or innovative way, nor was there a resource to roll-out the learning elsewhere if funding was only available for the 'pilot'.</p> <p>Roger Paterson summarised that the proposal could be reconsidered and that both its remit and the nature of the engagement with the communities. This would serve as a wider template more suitable for holistic engagement with Market Towns were wider concerns may be considered.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Briefings for Defra on rural socio-economic issues</p> <p>Simon Kiley gave a presentation which outlined that Action in rural Sussex had been contracted by Defra to be its grassroots eyes and ears on 4 key issues in the county: Broadband, Housing, Transport and Services and Fuel Poverty and Energy Generation. AirS was required to report on the activity in each of these themes, including its own work, that occurring in communities and that undertaken by key stakeholders.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting would occur, with data gathered from stakeholders as part of this process shared. A template would be distributed into which members could contribute their activity over the previous quarter which would then be collated and fed back to the partnership at the next meeting. This was focused on 'activity' and sought to be a light-touch reporting mechanism.</p> <p>Jeremy Leggett made clear that this represented a clear opportunity to highlight both successes and problems to Defra, although it was important that Defra fed-back on the information which they received.</p>	<p>SK to distribute the template.</p> <p>All to provide relevant information.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Taking the West Sussex Rural Partnership Forward</p> <p>Jeremy Leggett provided an overview of the current way in which the Rural Partnership and Rural Forum operated. Given the changing environment both across the county and more widely, now was an appropriate time to consider the focus of the Rural Partnership and how it could best serve rural communities. It was important to consider the development of the LEP, the West Sussex Co-Operative the National Park and the Health and Well-being Board amongst other things.</p> <p>These developments all represent opportunities for rural communities, however, it is crucial that rural issues are considered and that their needs are understood and responded to. To achieve this, the Rural Partnership may need to consider how it be structured to facilitate these outcomes.</p> <p>Paul Over and Kenrick Garraway highlighted the importance of the economy and highlighted that given that the other spatial partnerships (Coastal and Gatwick Diamond) were essentially solely economic in focus that the rural partnership may be viewed with less importance by the LEP if it did not consider economic issues.</p> <p>Sarah Hardman commented that although the economic elements were clearly of importance, one of the great strengths of the rural partnership was its holistic nature and ability to consider issues in the round.</p> <p>Jeremy Leggett concluded by asking that members review the terms of reference for the next meeting when the matter would be considered more fully. Input would be sought from all Rural Partnership members with potentially a working group developed to take it forward. It may also be appropriate to engage in dialogue with the other partnerships, particularly on common issues which did not fall into the LEPs remit.</p>	<p>All – to review the terms of reference before the next meeting</p>

8.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Peter Simpson provided a brief overview of the progress in each of the county's Leader areas. This clearly outlined the success of these schemes in distributing the funding across West Sussex.</p>	
9.	<p>Schedule of meetings for 2011/12</p> <p>The schedule for 2011/12 meetings was distributed to members.</p>	<p>AirS to distribute</p>
10.	<p>Rural Information Bulletin</p> <p>Rural information bulletins were distributed with the papers for the meeting.</p>	
11.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 20 September 2011 at a venue tbc from 2.00pm – 4.00pm</p>	