

**East Sussex Rural Partnership  
Monday 5 September 2011  
Reid Hall, Wartling  
2.00pm – 4.00pm  
Minutes**

Members Present:	Gill Cameron-Waller Don Cranfield Anne Crone Godfrey Fitzhugh Simon Hughes Lucy Knott Jeremy Leggett Brenda Mason Gillian van der Meer Sheila O'Sullivan  Graham Peters Keith Stevens Tom Stuart Cllr Bob Tidy	Wealden District Council Plumpton College WARR Partnership Federation of Small Businesses East Sussex County Council Lewes District Council Action in rural Sussex Rother District Council NFU Hastings and Rother / East Sussex Downs & Weald PCT WARR Partnership (Chair) East Sussex Association of Local Councils Wealden District Council East Sussex County Council
Members Apologies:	Charles Lant Jason Lavender Hamish Monro Chris Paterson Martin Searle Cllr Sylvia Tidy	Wealden District Council High Weald AONB CLA / WARR Partnership South Downs National Park Authority Federation of Small Businesses East Sussex County Council
Secretariat:	Simon Kiley	AirS

**Minutes**

Item		Actions
1	<b>Introductions and Apologies as above</b>	
2	<b>Minutes of the last meeting of the 6 June 2011 and matter arising</b> The minutes were taken as an accurate record. All of the associated actions had been completed.	
3	<b>Rural Farming Networks – Jeremy Leggett</b> Jeremy Leggett introduced this item by outlining that Defra were seeking to establish regional farming networks (incorporating rural issues) as replacements for the regional rural fora which were recently abolished.  A briefing paper had been distributed by Defra to rural stakeholders. This had generated very few responses. Members of the Rural Partnership had contributed mixed responses to this request. As a result, Jeremy Leggett had corresponded with the Rural Farming Issues Group with a view to taking this forward. On the basis of this, a letter from JL to Defra had been drafted and distributed to rural stakeholders. Comments were welcomed on the content of the letter or on the issue of farming networks more generally.  Godfrey Fitzhugh asked for clarification over the area the Rural Farming and	<b>All: Provide views on the future of Rural Farming Networks to JL.</b>

	<p>Issues Group covered. Jeremy Leggett clarified that this aligned with the former GOSE area boundaries, but it was keen to broaden these if required or appropriate.</p> <p>Gillian van der Meer made clear that the Rural Farming Issues Group was a large and effective group which had developed a significant degree of influence.</p> <p>Brenda Mason asked who sponsored the operation of the Rural Farming Issues Group. Jeremy Leggett stated that historically this had been the NFU and CLA and to his knowledge this was still the case.</p>	
4	<p><b>Broadband Improvement Plan in East Sussex – Simon Hughes</b></p> <p>Simon Hughes introduced an update on the Broadband Improvement Plan for East Sussex, this update was supported by the distributed briefing paper.</p> <p>BDUK had allocated £530 million for distribution across the UK in relation to broadband development. This had been distributed on the basis of bids submitted by each county and East Sussex (inc. Brighton and Hove) had been allocated £10.6 million. At this stage it was purely an allocation and is dependent on the production of a Broadband Delivery Plan. The allocation may change on the basis of this document.</p> <p>Despite this funding contribution, there would still be a significant shortfall in the funding required to develop broadband across East Sussex so that it met the identified needs. This allocation represents 25% of the total cost, with BDUK expecting an additional 25% contribution from the public sector and 50% from communication providers.</p> <p>The development of a Broadband Delivery Plan is the next priority. This will focus on detailing demand stimulation, logging demand through registration and from this information outlining the potential cost of delivering services which will meet the level and type of need identified.</p> <p>Bob Tidy outlined his disappointment with the BDUK allocation for East Sussex, but outlined that this still placed the county in the top 10 counties (by funding allocation).</p> <p>Graham Peters asked who would be responsible for undertaking the demand stimulation and who would be logging this information? Simon Hughes commented that this was still being decided.</p> <p>Jeremy Leggett clarified that there were lots of organisations keen to work with BDUK, particularly around demand stimulation and registration. However, there was very little co-ordination or joined up thinking in relation to this currently. Rural Community Councils such as AirS were currently part of a BDUK programme which trained their staff to stimulate and record broadband demand.</p> <p>Gill Cameron-Waller emphasised the work which Wealden DC had been undertaking with regard to small community broadband projects and would be keen to feed this into the process wherever possible.</p> <p>Keith Stevens asked whether mapping of infrastructure would be undertaken alongside that in relation to demand development? Simon Hughes made clear that this was essential and was already part of Public Services Network Mapping.</p>	<p><b>Action: Simon Hughes to distribute the East Sussex Broadband bid to members.</b></p>

	<p>Brenda Mason asked where the rural voice for broadband lays and how this is going to be factored into the process. Simon Hughes that commercially unattractive areas (i.e. rural) were the priority and that work was occurring to determine the technical requirements, type of need and levels of demand.</p> <p>Bob Tidy highlighted that the BDUK scheme focused on getting fibre connections to the community and that local solutions appropriate for that particular area would need to be developed from there. There may need to be local contributions depending on the nature of the solution.</p> <p>Jeremy Leggett emphasised the need to focus on the last 5-10% of the population for whom broadband access was most difficult and the least economically viable. Work in this area would generate the greatest benefits.</p> <p>Gill Cameron-Waller highlighted that communities take extensive interest in the procurement process, therefore it needs to be clear with obvious and achievable outcomes. Despite this it is almost impossible to keep everybody happy.</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>South Downs National Park Update – Jeremy Leggett</b></p> <p>Jeremy Leggett provided an update on the current status of the National Park Authority and did so on behalf of Chris Paterson who had sent his apologies.</p> <p>The South Downs National Park Authority had 3 years in which it had to develop a Management Plan and a Local Development Framework. It was currently developing wide-ranging methods of consultation in order to gather the information required to complete these tasks.</p> <p>During the summer it had begun this consultation with a stakeholder event held at Stanmer Park in Brighton on the direction of the National Park. There had also been technical workshops undertaken with key stakeholders across 7 key themes in order to gather and align evidence and information from across the Park area.</p> <p>In order to take the Management Plan forward, a Management Plan Partnership was being formed made up of key stakeholders. This partnership would co-ordinate the development of the Plan. It was hoped that a Management Plan would be developed by the late spring/early summer. This would be accompanied by a State of the Park report by the end of the year.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Rural economic issues and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEPs) – Jeremy Leggett/Simon Hughes</b></p> <p>Jeremy Leggett highlighted that it had been almost a year since a dialogue had begun regarding the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring that the SE LEP incorporated rural economic needs. Whilst an initial set of rural priorities had been sent to the LEP for its consideration during its formation, it had subsequently proved difficult to identify a means of so doing.</p> <p>Jeremy Leggett proposed focusing the next meeting of the East Sussex Rural Partnership on the rural economy and more specifically the South East LEP. This would work to ensure that the needs of the rural economy, and more specifically the rural economy of East Sussex were on the agenda of the SE LEP.</p> <p>Members of the Partnership unanimously agreed that this would be valuable. Lucy Knott and Brenda Mason commented that in order to maximise the effectiveness of the event that it was important to be very clear as to what it was seeking to achieve. This would need to explore the similarities and differences between the rural and urban areas of the LEP, as well as the differences within</p>	<p><b>Action:</b>  <b>AirS to co-ordinate a themed LEP meeting of the Rural Partnership in December.</b></p> <p><b>Jeremy Leggett to co-ordinate the agenda.</b></p>

	<p>the rural areas. A list of potential people to invite were suggested by those attending.</p> <p>Simon Hughes provided a brief update on the SE LEP. A Chair of the LEP Board was being recruited and would hopefully be in place by October/November. The LEP was identifying Enterprise Zones. A sum of £200,000 had been allocated as part of LEP start-up fund to develop the infrastructure and secretariat to support the LEP.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>RCAN Quarterly Reporting – Simon Kiley</b></p> <p>Simon Kiley provided a brief overview of the purpose of the RCAN reporting process to Defra. This outlined that AirS was tasked with gathering grassroots activity from rural stakeholders on 4 key themes: Housing &amp; Planning; Transport &amp; Services; Fuel Poverty &amp; Energy Generation and Broadband. This information is gathered quarterly and reported to Defra.</p> <p>In order to simplify the process, at the previous meeting it had been agreed that members of the Partnership would contribute activity updates where possible. This would be gathered in advance of the meeting so that a summary of the findings could be distributed to members at the meeting. It would also provide a chronological record of activity on these key themes. The reporting gathered for Quarter 2 of 2011/12 was distributed at the meeting.</p> <p>Simon Kiley made clear that all that required reporting was activity undertaken in that particular quarter, if no activity was undertaken in relation to that theme then nothing required reporting. Reporting was to be concise and to the point.</p> <p>Gill Cameron-Waller and Tom Stuart raised concerns over both the frequency and the value of the reporting. These views were echoed by Brenda Mason. Simon Kiley acknowledged that it was an additional burden for partners, but that it represented an opportunity to identify successes and barriers to success to central government.</p> <p>Jeremy Leggett clarified that the reporting was of value and that maybe this could be clarified by inviting the Rural Communities Policy Unit of Defra to the next meeting to explain how the data was used.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b>  <b>AirS to invite Defra Rural Policy Team to outline value of RCAN data at next meeting.</b></p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>No additional items were raised.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Date of next Rural Partnership meeting</b></p> <p>The next Rural Partnership meeting will be on Monday 5 December 2011 at the Reid Hall, Wartling starting at 2.00pm.</p> <p>As a result of discussions held at the meeting both the venue and time and subject to change.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b>  <b>AirS to update members of any changes to the meeting venue or time.</b></p>

The meeting closed at 3.45pm