

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY RURAL ADVISORY GROUP

NOTES OF THE MEETING ON 25 AUGUST 2004

Present: Trevor Cherrett (Chair)
John Archer
Tony Atkinson
Preetie Bindra
Valerie Carter
Mark Chessell
Colin Clarke
Bob Connell
Lisa Creaye-Griffin
Crispin Davies
Jo Ellis
David Pryce-Jones
Rosalind Rutt
Jacinta Thornley
Paul Treadgold
Colin White
Mark Wilson

In Attendance: Nick Woolfenden
Ray Bowers
Angela Parkes

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Steve Gilbert
Susie Ohlenschlager
Maddy Winter

2. **Notes of the Meeting on 8 July 2004**

The Minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting. ACTION – NW to circulate notes by email.

2.1 **Matters Arising**

- i. There is a meeting of a Peri Urban Group within the EU and a Conference on 21/22 October 2004 in Holland – some RAG members are attending.

3. **RAG input to development of the South East Plan: RAG Priority Issues – Policy development**

There was a constructive structured discussion around the policy issues raised in the draft policy document circulated in advance of the meeting. NW

will take on all key points in taking forward policy development. In brief, other points raised not specifically relating to topic areas included:

- The RAG discussion paper (which the group had agreed at previous meetings) had been sent to other Advisory Groups and the broad response was that they were pleased to see that RAG had taken a positive open approach, and at the direction rural matters were being taken. Specific comments received were being taken on board as appropriate.
- There is a need to have clearly definition of Urban and Rural, though recognising the strong interrelationships that exist (and the urban rural fringe – subject to separate work).
- RAG will have a key role both in influencing and developing policy, but also in rural proofing of draft policies.
- Further work is needed to look at the full implications of the Bartlett study – it will not be possible to do this in the timeframe of the development of the initial draft policies, but the work should be progressed to feed in to later stages of Plan development as appropriate.
- Key leads were identified to follow through specific dimensions of the rural policy development, in most cases with other Advisory Groups as identified in the discussion paper and at the meeting (NW to contact individuals to follow this up):
Spatial/strategic approaches – Trevor Cherrett/Ros Rutt/NW.
Sustainable communities/services – Crispin Davies.
Affordable housing – Trevor Cherrett.
Rural transport/accessibility – Mark Chessell.
Rural economy – Valerie Carter.
Local diversity/distinctiveness/landscape – Bob Connell.
Protected landscapes – Ros Rutt.
Natural resources – David Pryce-Jones.

4. Recent Rural Policy/Strategy Developments

4.1 PPS7

A copy of recently released PPS7 had been circulated and it was generally agreed that the new guidance was helpful as the basis for policy development. Further analysis of the implications of the PPS for the South East Plan policy development would be undertaken by the Assembly.

4.2 Defra Rural Strategy 2004

The group noted this important new Strategy, but would discuss it in fuller detail at future meetings as its implications became clearer.

4.3 New Rural and Urban Definitions

The group looked at maps that had been produced by the Assembly mapping out the new definitions recently released by the Government. They provide a finer level of detail than was previously available, and the implications for policy development will be investigated further.

4.4 Countryside Agency Vision for the Rural South East

The links previously developed with the Countryside Agency work on developing a rural vision should be maintained and progressed (draft vision to be launched at SERAF conference on 7 September).

5. Way Ahead/Next Steps

ACTIONS:

- Continue to work closely with Countryside Agency on Rural Vision for South East to seek consistent approach.
- Assembly Implementation Audit – RAG will need to keep involvement with this work as it progresses.
- NW to take forward comments at meeting on Rural Policies paper.
- NW to follow up actions with individuals who volunteered to take specific policy areas forward.
- RAG members encouraged to attend SERAF conference on 7 September.

6. Notice Board/Any Other Business

6.1 None raised.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Two provisional dates were put forward for the next meeting, these were 16 and 30 September 2004. Angela Parkes to contact the group to confirm date.

The meeting closed at 13.35