

Vibrant Rural Communities

Unlocking the Potential of the East of England's Rural Areas

Action Planning Workshops

11th February (Hylands House), 4th March (Santon Downham), 18th March (Wyboston Lakes)

The East of England Rural Forum believes that rural communities, their people, businesses and the natural environment are an essential part of the economic recovery. Our recent paper¹, “*Vibrant Rural Communities*” (2010), describes a vision for inclusive, prosperous and dynamic rural areas.

It highlighted three key challenges for rural areas over the next ten years:

- **digital inclusion** so that rural areas benefit from the opportunities presented by the web to improve skills, employment, access to services & social inclusion;
- **rural economic growth** so that rural areas can match the ongoing increase in the rural population with new sustainable jobs in high value sectors;
- **a positive approach to demographic change** by ensuring that housing, services & economic opportunity allow people of all ages, backgrounds & skills to thrive in rural areas.

These consultation events build on our paper by exploring how public and private sectors can work together with communities to deliver its recommendations. We are keen to work with all relevant organizations to develop pragmatic solutions which can be implemented at a time of budgetary constraint and which recognise the changes being planned in the delivery of services.

Agenda (*all three workshops will be identical*)

9.30	Registration with tea and coffee available	
10.00	Welcome & introduction to the RWP Action Plan workshop	Pat Holtom
10.05	Overview of the East of England Rural White Paper	Dr David Wood / Suzanne Harris
10.15	Five workshops covering: broadband and telephony services; economic growth & skills; housing & built environment; sustainable development; access to services	Facilitated by Rural EERF members
12.00	Feedback from each group and next steps - 2 key actions per group	Martin Collison
12.25	Conclusion	Pat Holtom
12.30	Networking and lunch	

¹ East of England Rural Forum (2010), *Vibrant Rural Communities: Unlocking the Potential of the East of England's Rural Areas*, <http://www.eerf.org.uk/Strategic-Rural-White-Paper.shtml>