

East of England Rural Forum **Chair's Job Description**

This job description should be read alongside the Rural Forum's Terms of Reference and the Members' Job Description.

This document outlines the key roles and responsibilities for the chair of the East of England Rural Forum.

1. The purpose of the Rural Forum

- 1.1 The purpose of the Rural Forum is to provide a voice for rural stakeholders at a strategic level, capable of influencing the rural agenda in the East of England. Specific roles of the Rural Forum are set out in the terms of reference.

2. The role of Chair

- 2.1 The Chair will be expected to chair all regular meetings of the Rural Forum and the annual conference. The Chair will act as leader and principal spokesperson for the Rural Forum and will actively contribute to the Rural Forum's work plan. The Chair will work with the secretariat to plan Rural Forum meetings.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 In addition to the responsibilities set out in the members' job description, the Chair will be expected to:
- Provide leadership to the Rural Forum
 - Represent the Rural Forum in discussions at regional and national level. The Chair will also represent the Rural Forum at quarterly Ministerial meetings.
 - Develop and maintain knowledge of rural issues and delivery arrangements within the region.
 - Develop a good working relationship with officers within relevant regional agencies and organisations. In particular, the Government Office for the East of England, The East of England Development Agency and the East of England Regional Assembly as well as the other members of the Rural Network Core Group (English Heritage, Rural Development Service East, representing Natural England, Environment Agency) and the board member for the Commission for Rural Communities representing the East of England region.
 - Encourage effective communication between Rural Forum members and between the members and their constituencies. The Chair will also ensure that the attendance and contribution of Rural Forum members is maintained to a high standard.

4. Skills and qualities

- 4.1 The Chair should:
- Have a broad experience of rural issues
 - Be able to take a regional view

- Be able to think strategically
- Be able to understand and distinguish between local, regional and national perspectives
- Be able to chair meetings effectively
- Be able to represent the views of the Rural Forum in other meetings and when talking to the media.
- Be able to represent the Rural Forum at regional, national and Ministerial levels.

5. Election of Chair

- 5.1 To assist with the rapid establishment of the Rural Forum, for the first year the Chair and two Vice-Chairs will be appointed by the Government Office for the East of England, The East of England Development Agency and the East of England Regional Assembly in consultation with the other members of the Rural Network Core Group. This appointment will be for a period of up to one year only, after which the normal election procedure will be implemented.

6. Election Procedure.

- 6.1 At the annual general meeting, the members of the Rural Forum, by a simple majority, will elect the Chair and two Vice-Chairs.
- 6.2 Nominations with a proposer and seconder must be made to the Secretariat at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting so that confirmation of willingness to stand by nominee can be obtained in advance.
- 6.3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs will be elected annually and should not normally serve for longer than three consecutive years. The first election of Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Rural Forum will take place in June 2006.

7. Vice-Chairs

- 7.1 Ideally, the Vice-Chairs should complement the background and experience of the Chair. It is expected that one of the Vice-Chairs will be an elected local authority member, if the Chair is not from this constituency.

8. Time Commitment

- 8.1 The Chair of the Rural Forum will be expected to:
- Chair the Rural Forum meetings and events.
 - Meet with the Secretariat to lead the planning and preparation of Rural Forum meetings, activities and annual conference.
 - Represent the Rural Forum at relevant national events (e.g. the national rural conference).
 - Attend quarterly meetings with Government Ministers.
 - Act as the Rural Forum's spokesperson when contact with the media is required and attend other events to represent the views of the Rural Forum.
 - Occasionally lead task and finish sub-groups focussing on specific issues or projects.
 - Attend and chair the Rural Forum's annual conference.

8.2 It is estimated that all the above will involve a time commitment of approximately 18 working days per year.

9. Expenses

9.1 The general guidance provided to members on travel and other expenses apply to the Chair and Vice-Chairs.