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## Evaluation of Consultation Events on Regional Implementation Plan for Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)

### Background

EEDA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission are developing plans to deliver this new RDPE funding programme. The East of England Rural Forum and GO-East are supporting and facilitating plan development. A series of regional and local events were used to consult with stakeholders on the Regional Implementation Plan.

This note focuses on the effectiveness of the events. Lessons learned will be applied to future activities of the Forum and its sub-groups.

### Event Programme

<b>9.30</b>	Chair's introduction	
<b>9.40</b>	Presentation introducing the RDPE in the East of England	Sean Crawford
<b>10.00</b>	Panel session to address basic Q&As on what RDPE is and how it will operate.	Chair: Alan Bell
<b>10.40</b>	Coffee and workshops	
<b>10.50</b>	Workshops – focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the balance of themes to be supported;</li> <li>➤ why these themes are considered important.</li> </ul>	Martin Collison
<b>11.50</b>	Feedback – Groups to identify 1 or 2 issues to share or questions to be raised with the panel.	Chair: Martin Collison
<b>12.20</b>	What Next – How the Regional Implementation Plan will be developed	Mike Render
<b>12.25</b>	Chair's closing remarks	
<b>12.30</b>	Close, with partners available to answer individual questions or issues from delegates	EEDA, Natural England and Forestry Commission staff

Dates and venues were:

**Wednesday 26 April - Mark's Tey Hotel, Colchester.  
(33 attended)**

**Thursday 27 April - Shuttleworth College, Old Warden, Bedfordshire.  
(41 attended)**

**Friday 28 April - The Maltings, Ely, Cambs.  
(53 attended)**

**Thursday 4 May - Easton College, Easton, Norwich.  
(59 attended)**

The contributions from the event were followed up by detailed submissions from individuals and organisations. These have been analysed and taken into consideration as the delivery partners develop the Regional Implementation Plan.

### **Key Points**

The main points that come forward from an analysis of the evaluation forms from the four events can be summarised as:

- 1) Total attendance was 186. Evaluation Questionnaires were returned by 49.
- 2) Overall scoring for both “fulfilling expectations” and “assessment of the day” were mainly in the range 6-8 out of 10.
- 3) Scores for locations, venues and timekeeping were mainly good or excellent.
- 4) One participant at the Mark's Tey event raised concerns over access by public transport and lack of information on public transport. Parking is always a potential problem at Ely Maltings. The majority of participants will need to travel by car but the issues of public transport and possible car sharing need to be addressed and highlighted for any forum event.
- 5) Because of the tight timetable for publicising and staging the events, combined with the diverse routes for disseminating invitations, a number of attendees did not receive all of the programme details and supporting papers. In particular, start time was missed from the final confirmation e-mail for some events.
- 6) Refreshments were generally considered “good” or “satisfactory”, supporting the decision to have tightly timetabled half-day events with no lunch provided. Individual feedback confirmed that many key participants would not have attended if the event had encroached into the afternoon. The relatively early start (9.00 registration for 9.30 start) was acceptable and worked well.
- 7) Scoring for structure and for content of the events was generally “good”.
- 8) “Cross section of attendees,” was the only question to provoke a poor marking 16% (7). It also prompted the highest number of “excellent” at 23% (10), with 61% “good”. Three participants at the Norfolk event were unhappy and a comment was offered that the audience was dominated by business and economic development interests (not necessarily actual businesses or their

representatives). Three participants at the Essex event scored “poor,” including one who felt that the environmental land management sector was under-represented. One participant at the Shuttleworth event felt that the business support, LSC and skills interests were not represented.

A review of attendees suggests that, with one exception, actual attendees covered the target stakeholder audience at most events. The perception of poor balance may partly reflect level of participation by some players and balance of discussions in the workshops. The exception was not one of those raised but relates to a lack of significant farmer, business or NFU/CLA participation at all but the Ely event.

9) 33% found the presentations and 28% found the handouts only satisfactory. Other attendees scored them good or excellent.

10) 85% found the workshops “good” and the remaining 15% thought they were “excellent.”

### **Evaluation Questionnaire Summary**

Responses to the questionnaire for all four events can be summarised as follows:

#### **Structure and Content of the Event**

How satisfied were you with the following:

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Subject matter	10	34	5	-
Cross-section of attendees	10	25	5	7
Presentations	5	27	15	-
Workshop sessions	6	34	-	-
The pace of the day	7	32	10	-
The handouts	5	30	14	-

## Housekeeping/Administrative Arrangements

How satisfied were you with the following:

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Location	16	22	4	1
Venue	15	20	7	-
Timekeeping	18	24	1	-
Refreshments	9	19	13	2

Please circle the most appropriate score:  
**(1=Poor, 10=excellent)**

Did the event fulfil your expectations?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
**(0)   (0)   (0)   (0)   (2)   (14)   (12)   (18)   (1)   (0)**

What was your overall assessment of the day?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
**( )   ( )   ( )   (1)   (2)   (14)   (7)   (15)   (4)   ( )**

## Annex1: Evaluation of Individual Venues and events

Responses to the questionnaire for each of four events were as follows:

Wednesday 26 April - Mark's Tey Hotel, Colchester.

### Structure and Content of the Event

*How satisfied were you with the following?*

13 sheets returned

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Subject matter	1	10	2	
Cross-section of attendees	1	6	1	3
Presentations	1	4	7	
Workshop sessions	1	9	2	1
The pace of the day		9	4	
The handouts		8	5	

### Housekeeping/Administrative Arrangements

*How satisfied were you with the following?*

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Location	1	9		1
Venue		7	3	
Timekeeping	4	6		
Refreshments	1	5	3	1

Please circle the most appropriate score:  
(1=Poor, 10=excellent)

Did the event fulfil your expectations?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
(0) (0) (0) (0) (0) (4) (0) (5) (1) (0)

What was your overall assessment of the day?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
(0) (0) (0) (1) (0) (3) (0) (4) (2) (0)

***Any other comments, including views on how to develop the opportunities identified today:***

I think the mainstream should consider the local communities in the plan. Explain the different abbreviations so that most delegates are aware of the various bodies. (ie, LEADER Group etc).

All questions were answered. Panel sessions worked well. Information that we were given was as clear as it could be given we are working with an evolving programme in a difficult area. I got a lot out of the day & excellent opportunity for networking. Thank You.

Starting time of event not clear.

No reference made in information before the event about accessibility by public transport which is disappointing. Considering there is a mainline station a short distance away from the venue. Unfortunately the route from the station for pedestrians & cyclists is extremely dangerous because of cars so perhaps the choice of venue could have been reconsidered !

Too much on ELS & HLS with no sector attendance. Should have been supported better.

More detailed consultation needed to identify needs & gaps on a sub regional basis.

Thursday 27 April - Shuttleworth College, Old Warden, Bedfordshire.

**Structure and Content of the Event**

*How satisfied were you with the following?*

**10 sheets returned**

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Subject matter	3	7		
Cross-section of attendees	2	5	2	1
Presentations	2	6	2	
Workshop sessions	2	7		
The pace of the day	3	6	1	
The handouts	2	6	2	

**Housekeeping/Administrative Arrangements**

*How satisfied were you with the following?*

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Location	5	4		
Venue	7	2		
Timekeeping	8	1		
Refreshments	5	4		

Please circle the most appropriate score:  
**(1=Poor, 10=excellent)**

Did the event fulfil your expectations?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
**(0)   (0)   (0)   (0)   (0)   (2)   (1)   (6)   (0)   (0)**

What was your overall assessment of the day?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
**(0)   (0)   (0)   (0)   (0)   (1)   (3)   (4)   (1)   (0)**

***Other comments:***

I wish partners well in putting this together and implementing the programme with its constraints and conflicting interests of those involved.

The impression that the partners are willing to listen is strong. How they are listened to by those higher up will be anticipated.

Get the 3 EEDA project facilitators in place as soon as possible to make sure good projects start on 1/1/07.

Business support (sub rep) not represented or LSC/Skills/JC+.



Friday 28 April - The Maltings, Ely, Cambs.

### Structure and Content of the Event

*How satisfied were you with the following?*

#### 12 Forms returned

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Subject matter	3	8	1	
Cross-section of attendees	3	9		
Presentations	1	8	3	
Workshop sessions	1	9	2	
The pace of the day	2	9	1	
The handouts	1	9	2	

### Housekeeping/Administrative Arrangements

How satisfied were you with the following:

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Location	4	5	2	
Venue	4	5	2	
Timekeeping	2	9	1	
Refreshments		5	6	1

Please circle the most appropriate score:

**(1=Poor, 10=excellent)**

Did the event fulfil your expectations?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
(0) (0) (0) (0) (1) (6) (4) (1) (0) (0)

What was your overall assessment of the day?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
(0) (0) (0) (0) (1) (6) (3) (2) (0) (0)

## **Other comments:**

Is there anywhere else you could choose that has more convenient car parking ? in Cambs.

All very vague- lack of clarification on some key issues – eg: what are the basics?

Hope some of our comments are used, eg: passed onto other organisations such as LSC & Defra. How will we hear about these projects/programmes so that we can bid?

Far too wordy. Discussions need to be easier to understand. For those who do not understand “corporate” speak.

Talk to us more.

Disappointed that there was little acknowledgement of local knowledge and expertise in respect of European funding and the need to build on it. The wood burner example was appalling with so many flaws in the most treeless county of England that it showed little thought.

Worked from a fairly vague brief. The initial background paper was good pre-reading. Budget is too small to cover all the bases. Will have to be selective.

Would have been good for each group to be in a separate room during the workshop, hard to hear people.

Parking poorly described – distance was not advised.

Thursday 4 May - Easton College, Easton, Norwich.

### Structure and Content of the Event

*How satisfied were you with the following?*

14 forms returned

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Subject matter	3	9	2	
Cross-section of attendees	4	5	2	3
Presentations	1	9	3	
Workshop sessions	2	9	3	
The pace of the day	2	8	4	
The handouts	2	7	5	

### Housekeeping/Administrative Arrangements

How satisfied were you with the following:

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Location	6	4	2	
Venue	4	6	2	
Timekeeping	4	8		
Refreshments	3	5	4	

Please circle the most appropriate score:  
**(1=Poor, 10=excellent)**

Did the event fulfil your expectations?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
**(0) (0) (0) (0) (1) (2) (3) (6) (0) (0)**

What was you overall assessment of the day?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10  
**(0) (0) (0) (0) (1) (4) (1) (5) (1) (0)**

**Other comments:**

No scope given to comment in any detail.

Pity that the audience was dominated by vested business & economic development interests.

Feedback session didn't really allow for groups to feedback – Martin Collison dominated session.

Very concerned about the number of quangos that may be set up to invent projects to spend the money on rather than putting the funding down to those who deserve to get it.

There must be transparency and governance of the programme.

A forum on the EERF website ?

Slightly late in the day to hold an event of this nature, given the timescale for implementation and development of the draft Regional Implementation Plan. Should have been held a few weeks earlier, to allow committee organisations more time to develop their responses.

Appropriate representation via the EERF.