

East of England Rural Forum's Housing Sub-group
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East of England Rural Forum

EERF Rural housing Sub-group

Minutes of meeting: 2.00pm, 2 September 2008

Hastoe Housing Association, Little Chesterford, Cambridge

Present:

Graham Hedger (Chair), Andrew Budden, Sandy Cruickshank (minutes), John Lefever, Louise Wilby, Tim Lucas, Mike Cramp (for M. Aust), Susanne Ringham.

Apologies:

Martin Aust, Ulrike Maccariello, Tim Isaac, Moira Groborz, Darryl Smith, Becky Ashley, Joanne Webb, Graham Tomlinson, John Yates.

1. Introduction

Graham Hedger welcomed members and visitors, in particular Susanne Ringham representing the GO East Housing Team.

2. Minutes from the last meeting (4 June 2008) and matters arising

Accepted as a true record. Matters arising: all to be raised under agenda items.

3. Rural housing Enablers Up-date

Although funding arrangements are currently in place, there is still an ambition to achieve a longer term funding arrangement. Several formulas are being discussed but ideally there should be a regional model agreed. There is a need for further discussion with the RCC network to get this achieved.

John and Martin, continue to offer their time to discuss with RCCs the practicalities of implementation.

The sub-group continues to provide support and training opportunities for the RHEs.

Action: Graham Hedger to follow up contact with David Wood of RAE to request the RCC network discusses the issue with John and Martin.

4. Matthew Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing.

Although there is no formal response mechanism established for comments on the findings and recommendations of the Matthew Taylor review, the sub-group agreed that there was a need to use the MT review as an opportunity to highlight issues and messages to national and regional government departments and agencies. In particular:

- a. the findings of the CLA/EERF Survey on release of land for affordable housing which identifies a wider range of barriers than the RICS survey commissioned by the Review.
- b. the longer term future of Rural Housing Enabler function.
- c. dismissal of radical funding models that have any reference to the inclusion of release of land for market housing ie the model recently developed in the Hastoe report for Housing Corporation.
- d. lack of consideration of the issue of RSL's being unable to share fuel cost savings with tenants that would fund further renewable energy investment.
- e. Concern that the recommendations of this report will be shelved as the Rural Housing Commission Report has been shelved.

Options proposed:

1. That the EERF writes to Barbara Follett MP, Minister for the East of England Region, explaining the EERF's opinions on the report. However, it was important that such a letter covered more than just rural housing (as does the Review). Therefore, the whole EERF must be involved and must provide comment.
2. Raise the specific issue of reinvestment of additional rent in renewable energy technology with CLG.

Action: Andrew Budden to raise MT Review at EERF meeting on 12 September. Also to include MT Review in EERF December meeting agenda on social inclusion.

Action: SC to ensure MT Review is an agenda item for December meeting.

Action: SC to contact Martin Collison, secretariat of the EERF's Skills and Enterprise Sub-group to invite contribution to the letter.

Action: SC to ask John Yates for briefing on RRAF Chair discussion on responding to MT Review and whether a coordinated RRAF response is planned.

Action: John and Martin to provide briefing on the specific issue of reinvestment of additional rent in renewable energy technology to circulate to sub-group to start development of a discussion paper to forward to CLG.

5. Sub-group action plan for 2008/09

Discussion regarding taking forward activity in the near and longer term. The group agreed it should initially build on work in the recent past rather than find new issues to pursue. This is particularly important in view of reduced resource available to the EERF in terms of funding and secretariat.

Actions for consideration:

Follow up EERF/CLA report with links to Matthew Taylor Review report and the EERF Conference Report on achieving affordability and low carbon.

1. Follow up issue of RSLs funding for renewable energy technology installation in new and existing homes. The Sub-group has opportunity to stimulate debate by developing a balanced discussion paper based on factual, robust financial evidence and a broad understanding of the issues from a range of stakeholder view points rather than as a single issue pressure group.
2. Follow up on EERF/CLA report. Raise awareness of the identified barriers (mostly fiscal) that were not identified by the RICS survey prepared for and referred to by the Matthew Taylor Review. Potential to brief the regional minister on an issue that has been identified and researched in this region and requesting that the issue be taken to central government departments for response/action.

Tim Issac has confirmed that CLA would be very willing to repeat the landowner survey at an appropriate time to measure any change in landowner perception of barriers.

3. The sub-group to consider the recommendations of the EERF 2008 conference Report to identify and prioritise issues for future action.
4. The Sub-group agreed to work with Andrew Budden to ensure housing issues are included in the Social Inclusion themed EERF meeting agenda for December.
5. The Sub-group must support the EERF's lobbying role with ministers and central government departments. There is the opportunity to provide evidenced briefing for the RRAF/Defra minister quarterly meetings as well as raising specific policy issues with the regional minister.
6. With reduced EERF funding, careful consideration of future events. Arrangement would need to include identifying funding partners at an early stage. Investigate opportunity to get involved in the Chartered Institute of Housing events etc.

Action: SC to draft a paper for sub-group discussion that will draw together EERF/CLA report, conference report

Action: Andrew Budden to take forward development of EERF 12 December meeting agenda, ideally in association with Rural Action East but with Sub-group support on housing issues content.

Action: Sub-group to review the Sub-group's 'Statement of Purpose' prepared in 2005 and provide comment to SC on how it should be updated.

6. Housing Corporation Up-date.

Becky Ashley was unable to attend the meeting. However, as the sub-group requested she provided written briefing and analysis of the bidding round outcomes **(copy attached)**.

The sub-group agreed that this should be an agenda item at the next meeting assuming Becky was able to attend. To structure the discussion, the sub-group agreed points requiring clarification should be sent to Becky.

Action: SC to gather points for clarification to send to Becky.

Action SC to include analysis of bidding outcomes as an item on next agenda.

7. AOB

Andrew Budden reminded the sub-group of the opportunity for housing to be included in the social inclusion agenda for the 12 December EERF meeting. Ideas for issues or speakers will be welcomed.

John Lefever will represent Graham Hedger and the sub-group at the Housing Reform Green Paper Policy Forum on 19th September 2008.

8. Date of future meetings

2.00pm, 3 December 2008. Venue - Flagship office, Histon, Cambridge.

Suggested dates for 2009

2.00pm, 9 March) venues to be confirmed.
2.00pm, 3 June)
2.00pm, 3 September)
2.00pm, 3 December)

9. To note - future EERF event dates

2008:	12 December EERF meeting
2009:	4 March, EERF Conference
	18 March EERF AGM
	10 June EERF meeting
	16 September EERF meeting
	8 December EERF meeting
2010:	3 March EERF Conference

**Sandy Cruickshank
Secretary, East of England Rural Forum's Housing Sub-group.
18 September 2008**