

**East of England Rural Forum
c/o EERA Housing Team
Flempton House
Flempton
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP28 6EG**



East of England Rural Forum

Telephone: 1206 506575

E-mail: joanne.webb@colchester.gov.uk

**EERF Rural housing Sub-group
Minutes of meeting: 2.00pm, 3 December 2008**

Flagship Housing, Histon, Cambridge

Present:

Graham Hedger (Chair), Martin Aust, Joanne Webb (minutes), John Lefever, Louise Wilby, Susanne Ringham, Neil Kelly (in place of Becky Ashley), Richard Lloyd (EST).

Apologies:

Andrew Budden, Tim Isaac, Moira Groborz, Darryl Smith, Becky Ashley, John Yates, Tim Lucas

1. Introduction

Graham Hedger welcomed members. Thanks given to Sandy Cruickshank for all his hard work as secretariat for the group. Sandy has been promoted to the Essex, Southend and Thurrock Team Leader so will continue to take an interest in the group.

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

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

3. Secretariat of Group

Joanne Webb from the EERA Housing Team was introduced as taking over the secretariat role.

4. Introduction to the Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) is a government sponsored company which provides advice to domestic households on energy saving. Next year they will expand their remit to include water and waste. Although the Carbon Trust is focused at business, the EST also includes transport.

The EST has changed to a Regional delivery approach and Richard Lloyd is Regional Manager for the East of England.

Contact details: Richard.Lloyd@est.org.uk 07951 272043

The EST will work with local authorities over the national indicators, especially 186 (reduction of per capita consumption of CO2). EST is able to give advice and support on new build and help through the planning and design process. They are considering how to help LAs with retro-fitting.

5. Homes and Communities Agency update

Neil Kelly was attending in place of Becky Ashley. It was agreed that the update would be completed and distributed after the meeting. In the future the HCA would like to agree a template for the information which can be sent out each quarter.

Action: Becky Ashley to provide update for distribution.

6. Group Terms of Reference

It was agreed that they were clear and precise. They were agreed by the group. GH to present them to the Forum Steering Group

7. RHE Update

Martin Aust and John Lefever had met with Rural Action East and representatives from three of the Rural Community Councils to discuss their on-costs model for funding the Rural Housing Enabler service. There needs to be a clearer join up between surveys and start-on-sites. Some analysis is also needed on whether there are common factors on whether sites progress after surveys. It is likely that 1% of scheme costs with the cost of surveys netted off would be agreeable. Rural Action East is coordinating getting agreement.

It was suggested that RHEs should let the Dioceses know of likely schemes as often the Church of England owns land which could be used.

REAP do not require village Housing Needs Surveys, but use housing register data and the district housing needs survey to establish need. They use the RHEs for capacity building.

The RHEs are having their next regional meeting in February which will include Gill Cook looking at surveys. It was suggested that planners could be invited to contribute their perspective and also the REAP LAs.

8. Matthew Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing- follow up

The chairs of the Regional Rural Forums meet with the Rural Minister quarterly. This is an opportunity to put forward any issues to be feedback.

Action: Graham to talk to John Yates. Graham, Andrew Budden, Martin collinson and John Yates to draft a response for the next meeting.

9. Representation on Partnerships

Andrew Budden is standing down as Vice Chair from the Rural Forum. This means he will also withdraw from RHAG. Martin Aust volunteered to represent the group at RHAG with John Lefever as a substitute.

Sustainable Construction East would like a representative. John Lefever volunteered.

Action: Jo Webb to inform groups of the representatives

10. RSL Renewable Energy Sources

Martin Aust had prepared some information about the costs of renewable energy sources, savings to tenants, and potential ways of recouping this money. There is the facility to increase rents up to 5% over the restructured rent level. Individual RSLs could introduce policies to implement this, as long as they have not done this already. This could lead to £4 per week extra on rent which starts to cover the capital costs of installation of the energy sources.

Sub-regions could be encouraged to set down in their strategies that if a scheme is built to code x then RSLs are encouraged to use a rent increase to offset this.

Action: Martin Aust will draft a letter for sub-regions with the help of John Lefever. Richard Lloyd offered his help as he has access to information on running costs.

11. Other Business

A draft response to the CLG consultation on Community Land Trusts was circulated.

Action: All to send comments to Jo Webb by 10th December.

Susanne Ringham asked for messages she could take back about the credit crunch and rural housing. The group said that shared ownership was problematic because it tied up capital, preventing new schemes coming forward. People are unable to get mortgages.

Action: Graham Hedger will feedback to John Yates as a message for the minister.

John Lefever requested that Local Authorities ensured their s106s were flexible to cope with the current economic climate. Ipswich BC is using a s106 which specifies 'shared ownership or intermediate rent' which allows some movement.

Action: Include this as advice in the letter which is being drafted over recouping the cost of renewables (item 10)

8. Date of future meetings

2.00pm, 10 March 2009 Venue – Hastoe Offices, Little Chesterford
2.00pm, 3 June - to be confirmed
2.00pm, 3 September)
2.00pm, 3 December)

9. To note - future EERF event dates

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

Joanne Webb

**Secretary, East of England Rural Forum's Housing Sub-group.
03 December 2008**