

East of England Rural Forum (EERF)

Minutes of the Learning and Skills Sub Group

Held on 24th November 2008 at EEDA offices, Victory House, Histon Cambs

In attendance:

Martin Collison (chair)

John Yates, Chair EERF

Sue O’Gorman, NIACE

John Simmons, EEDA (secretariat)

Heather Turner, LSC

Paul Williams, Essex Adult and Community Learning

Anne-Marie Hamilton, Beds RCC

Edward Bales, Poultec Training

Mike Appleyard, LANTRA

Karen Beckwith, EESCP

David Lawrence, Easton College

----- D R A F T -----

		Action
1.	Apologies for absence Mick Carr, GO-East Claire Nicholson-Clinch, GO-East David Wood, RAE	
2.	Notes of the previous meeting Agreed, with the addition of David Lawrence’s apologies.	JS
3.	Cost of Rural Learning research Sue O’Gorman presented a summary of the findings, concentrating on the way forward and putting forward eight possible pilot studies (<i>see appendix 1</i>). Desk research and focus group findings already presented at earlier meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- need to decide on regional approach to the work- need to establish single or multiple locations for pilot project development- indication of type of company consulted was requested by Anne-Marie Hamilton Action agreed following discussion of each pilot: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pilots 1 (IAG through libraries) and 4 (Barriers to access) to be taken forward by Rural Forum partners- Rest of pilot work to be pursued through RDPE via their steering group (LANTRA lead)	S O’G

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anne-Marie Hamilton to take bullet-points back to Training Groups following circulation of the slides - Use of existing best-practise examples in developing pilots (e.g. migrant workers, poultry passport) strongly recommended. - Alignment to LSC/JCP Integrated employment and skills strategy pilots in Suffolk and Cambs (Dec) and Norfolk (Feb) to be considered with relevant personnel, who may be able to provide more appropriate LSC representation for this group than Heather Turner, who is to move to other work - Results to be incorporated by EESCP in Regional Funding Advice now being developed for central government to plan future spending. Agreed that this document should be tabled for discussion at this group to strengthen mainstream engagement. - Ensure development work links back to the sub-group's recent position paper. 	<p>JS</p> <p>KB/EESCP</p>
4.	<p>Train to Gain – revised guidance</p> <p>Heather Turner circulated available documents. Much more detail to come out on plans at the end of January 2009. Government to provide £350m in support for business but mechanisms to provide this not yet in place.</p> <p>Key issues raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very high rate (90%?) of existing L2 qualifications in rural areas may be masked by national figures. - Adult apprenticeships for change of career now developing - High rate of employer contribution for second L2. - Greater clarity over measurement in audit framework for providers - Role of SSCs and broader role of EESCP in ensuring up-to-date information and 'play in' to other key funding packages. 	
5.	<p>EERF update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - March 2009 Annual Meeting to be on the subject of the 'Credit Crunch'. Aim for the event is to produce practical solutions, and need to ensure those who may temporarily leave the sector are able to return in a better economic climate. Ideas for the agenda to be passed to John Yates. - Emma Powlett now handling co-ordination role to ensure improved efficiency 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of position papers and assessment of impact to be undertaken. - Food security issues raised at recent regional conference to be pursued - New government minister is supportive of independent regional forums and wants to hear about regional priorities and how they may challenge mainstream agendas – response to be developed. - December meeting to focus on social inclusion issues. 	
6.	<p>AOB and partner updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RDPE skills: Mike Appleyard outlined arrangements following the outcome of the tender process – LANTRA to lead overall co-ordinating body with delivery across both Vocational and Higher-level skills contracts to be undertaken by a wide-ranging provider group and organised into six industry-chaired working groups. Fuller report on development and links to pilots to be tabled at the next meeting. - This group to ensure separate voice from RDPE in recognition that it represents a broader focus than that of RDPE. Using RDPE as a ‘test-bed’ for wider replication in the rural economy can be a way forward. David Lawrence to prepare a short note on key points and challenges. - Chairing arrangements: meeting confirmed Martin Collison as chairman and thanked him for his work so far. Annual review of chairing arrangements agreed. - Membership: review of coverage suggested. Areas for expanded membership could include RDPE and greater business representation. - EESCP: Karen Beckwith announced her move to a new private-sector post. EESCP contact to be maintained via Amanda Montague. 	<p>MA</p> <p>DL</p> <p>JS/MC</p>
7.	<p>Date and time of next meetings</p> <p>Agreed future pattern to be quarterly, one month in advance of Forum dates. Calendar for whole year to be established. Potential dates to be circulated.</p> <p>Suggestions for agenda items for future meetings to be circulated by members – will include T2G, pilot progress and RDPE agenda. Also it is expected that the group will broaden its focus in the area of economic regeneration.</p>	<p>JS</p>