

Consultation Response Action Group (CRAG) meeting
Monday 11th June 2007, 11am – 1pm
Lucombe House, County Hall, Exeter

Present:

Phil Wagstaff (PW), Chair	Churches Together
Paul Delahoy (PD)	Devon Towns Forum
Pauline Warner (PaW)	Devon County Council
Jamie Evans (JE)	Devon County Council
Martyn Warren (MW)	Rural Futures Unit, Uni of Plymouth
Leanne Crawford (LC)	Devon Rural Network
David Kinross (DK)	Community Council of Devon
Jen Anderton (JA), secretariat	Devon Rural Network

Apologies:

Ian Mercer	South West Forest/Dartmoor Commoners Council
Steve Pitcher	North Devon District Council
Paul Sadler	Environment Agency
Denise Ramsey	Natural England
Dennis Brewer	National Farmers Union
Yve Tyrrell	SWRDA

1. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes were agreed

2. Rural Proofing Criteria

PW updated new members of the group to say that the Rural Proofing criteria had been simplified to a certain extent to be more user friendly. Heather Hillman did this piece of work. Revised criteria was emailed to all in January.

PaW queried whether the criteria was reflective of the new Rural Strategy objectives. JA explained that the criteria were certainly high level and strategic but that each proofing process should be considerate of relevant objectives in the new strategy.

PD queried whether the rural proofing process could be used to 'proof' the MCTi plans? It was explained that the criteria is really intended for regional/national based proposals and consultations. JA explained that there is a quick response guide that can be used to respond to plans etc.

Action: JA to circulate Quick response guide to DK and PD

3. Proforma for CRAG

JA circulated a proforma for CRAG members to complete earlier in the year. So far JA has received responses from Paul Sadler, Mary TR, Phil Wagstaff, Denise Ramsey and Martyn Warren. Could the rest of CRAG complete the proforma attached with the minutes, this is really just to update my records.

Action: all CRAG members to complete proforma

4. SW Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) – Examination in Public (EiP) – brief update from Pauline Warner

PaW updated the group. Seems to have been so far and is likely to continue to be an interesting process. It has been relatively hard for the environmental/rural lobbyist's to put forward suggestions to benefit the rural areas as opposed to simply complaining about what currently happens and any gaps in the RSS currently. They have been asked to give ideas as to what a rural area should look like. Representations for the rural areas have come from SWCoRE, EA, NE, NFU, CPRE and RSPB amongst others.

One of the most difficult/interesting topics so far has been the day about development policies and the discrepancies that occur between predicted levels of growth and household needs from the ONS and current suggested numbers in the RSS (23,000) but predicted between 25,000-30,000 houses will be needed across SW region.

There is an affordable housing debate scheduled for 27th June, which can be observed (but not participated in) by anyone.

Some of the higher level strategic debates have been about what is a sustainable community/environment?

JE asked whether or not the RSS was taking in to account future issues such as food security?

PaW advised that all statements made at the EiP, Rural and all can be viewed on the EiP website at www.southwesteip.co.uk

PaW also mentioned the work that the Devon Strategic Housing Group is doing to assess how and if a community is sustainable. This all fits in with the LAA.

A consultation paper will be circulated to attendees of the sustainable communities event last November and to other stakeholders. JA attended the event and will circulate email to CRAG

Action: JA forward on email re. sustainable communities

Action: JA to summarise rural statements on EiP website and circulate to group

5. RDPE Draft operation Programme

JA briefly tried to explain about the RDPE but it is a confusing process with many elements. The current consultation invites views on the draft RDPE in the context of an Environmental Report on the Programme's likely overall impact. JE on behalf of DCC and JA on behalf of DRN submitted an initial response as requested and will submit a full response each by 5th July. See web address below:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/rural-dev2007-13/index.htm>

Action: JA to circulate initial response paper

Action: JA to proof the above DRAFT RDPE in environmental context and get members input

6. Calendar of forthcoming rural proofing exercises

1. DCLG proposals for future unitary structures: stakeholder consultation (closes 22nd June). All were in agreement that this should be proofed in the context of impact Exeter would have if it becomes unitary

Action: JA to liaise with Roland Pyle and Duncan Ford, DCC as they are working on DCC responses

2. Sustaining Rural Communities consultation paper (SPARSE) (closes 13th July) to frame the work of the Sparsity Partnership for Authorities delivering Rural Services for the next 4-5 years.

Action: JA to circulate document which has questions included. Please send any comments/answers back to JA to co-ordinate response.

3. Community Land Trusts: a consultation paper which seeks comments from all those with an interest in affordable housing in Devon, on the support that might need to be in place if community land trusts were to play a more extensive and systematic role.

Action: JA to circulate email with consultation document. Please send any comments/answers back to JA to co-ordinate response

7. AOB and date of next meeting

It was decided that the next meeting should be spent proofing and in particular concentrating on the emerging Devon Economic Strategy and Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Meeting dates suggested (these may be subject to change if unnecessary)

Thurs 13th Sept, 11am – 12.45pm – Exeter

Thurs 6th Dec, 11am – 12.45pm - Exeter