

**Devon Rural Network
Interim Steering Group Meeting
Friday 12th September 2003 at Larkbeare House, Exeter**

Present:

Dominic Ackland	- Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust
Phil Collins	- English Nature
Chris Woodruff	- East Devon AONB
Stuart Horne	- West Devon Business Information Point
Gary Ensor	- Business Link / Farm Advisory Service
Steve Pitcher	- North Devon DC
David Whiteley	- North & West Devon Economic Partnership
Tom Langdon Davis	- MCTI Chairs Forum
Nick Clatworthy	- Core Events (consultant for conference)
Michael Winter	- Exeter University - Chair – DRN
Eddie Farwell	- Devon County Council - DSP Facilitator
Heather Hillman	- Devon County Council – DRN Facilitator

Apologies from:

Ian Tearle	– North & East Devon Health Authority
Jay Talbot	– Community Council of Devon
Geoff Bateman	– Environment Agency
Morris Watts	– Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Ian Mercer	– South West Forest
Stephen Hill	– Mid Devon District Council
David Incoll	- West Devon Borough Council
Ian Robertson	- Devon Rural Transport Forum

Introductions were made around the table and Michael Winter gave a background to the Strategy and DRN.

- MW and EF indicated that it will be necessary to develop an action plan for the implementation of the Rural Strategy, for which we may need outside assistance.
- EF presented the latest draft of the governance paper for the DRN. DW put forward two suggestions for amendment to this paper which all were in agreement with. **Action: EF to amend.**
- It was considered important that the DRN engages with all tiers of organisations and local government, also a good geographic coverage of Devon and a wide range of sectors.
- There was a suggestion that organisations are asked to specifically sign up to the strategy and emphasise that active participation will be necessary to make it successful, also that they should sign up to a protocol of partnership working across Devon. **Action EF and SP to draft.**
- EF emphasised that we need to keep subsidiarity in mind and undertake an exercise which identifies the gaps in delivery mechanisms for the RS. For this the DRN needs a resource. It was agreed that this should be done at an intermediary level as it would be impossible to identify every individual project.
- The frequency of meeting of the entire network was agreed at 3 times per year.

Steering Group

- It was agreed that a representative for the steering group should be sought from the Devon Districts Forum. Also that we need both 'spenders' and 'doers' to be represented.
- There should be an absolute maximum of 25 on the steering group but 20 or less if possible.
- It was suggested that there should be representation as follows:
 - 2 from District Councils
 - 2 from DCC

- 3 from the environment sector including the Environment Agency and Environment Devon
 - 3 from Local Economic Partnerships
 - 3 from the social sector including LSC, Health and Culture
 - 2 from community sector (Jay T to co-ordinate) (**Action JT in consultation with EF and HH**)
 - Co-options as necessary
- There may be many more but it was agreed that EF, MW and HH would come up with a proposal and circulate. **Action EF, MW and HH.**
 - It was agreed that it would be unfair to invite regional funders to the steering group just to observe and that they should participate fully as members.
 - The steering group should meet every two months until the DRN is established and working groups formed, after which time the meetings could be less frequent.
 - It was suggested that funding for a DRN resource could come from the RDA utilising the pot for the Devon SRP which currently does not exist. **Action MW to follow up his letter to the RDA regarding this.**

Conference

- EF and HH outlined different options for the conference and there was much discussion including advice from the consultant NC.
- The main points were to reduce the section on governance and have some time before lunch (at morning tea?) where representatives can formally sign up to the strategy. This could also involve a press call at lunch time.
- In the afternoon there would be working groups based on the 5 aims of the rural strategy – probably 2 per theme. These groups would be allocated arbitrarily before the event with delegates only given the option whether or not to stay for the afternoon. This is in order to avoid having the 'usual suspects' in each theme. Each aim will therefore have 2 facilitators from the interim steering group as follows:
 - Aim 1: David Whiteley and Tom Langdon Davis
 - Aim 2: Phil Collins and Dominic Ackland
 - Aim 3: Eddie Farwell and Ian Tearle
 - Aim 4: Ian Mercer and Steve Pitcher (**Action: EF to approach Ian Mercer as he was not at the meeting**)
 - Aim 5: Jay Talbot and David Incoll (**Action: EF to approach both as they were not at the meeting**)
- For each aim there will be an introduction and very short power point presentation in a morning session which will be undertaken by PC, TLD, IT/EF, SP and DI/JT. **Action all.**
- There was a query over whether or not Lord Haskins is happy with the venue and time etc as MW had not heard back from him office. **Action: MW to check with Lord Haskins asap.**
- The invites will need to go out by Friday 19th September so HH and NC will re-write the conference agenda and circulate. Also develop the invitations. **Action NC and HH.**
- All revised documents will be circulated via email before the next meeting.

Date and time of next meeting 4.00pm on Monday 6th October at County Hall – Please go to reception and you will be directed to a room. There should be no problem with parking at County Hall at this time of the day. Please go to main reception and you will be directed from there.