

## DRAFT MINUTES

### DRN STEERING GROUP MEETING

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, Exminster House

<b>Present:</b>	Dominic Acland	Torbay Coast & Countryside Service
	Geoff Bateman	Environment Agency
	Sue Brownlow	South West RDA
	Mike Ellingham	NFU
	Gary Ensor	Business Link
	Emma Harding	DCC
	Heather Hillman (Co-ordinator)	DRN
	Ian Mercer (Vice Chair)	SW Forest (Chair)
	Sue Smith	DCC
	Jay Talbot	Community Council of Devon
	Michael Winter (Chair)	Exeter University
	Chris Woodruff	East Devon AONB
	Stephen Hill	Mid Devon DC

**Apologies:** David Incoll  
Phillip Wagstaff  
Ian Tearle  
David Whiteley  
Steve Pitcher  
Phil Collins

### 1. Minutes of the last meeting

- a. Haskin's Review – there is no formal statement in response to this yet and it was suggested that there was no urgency for one immediately but that the DRN should stay involved in discussions about it.
- b. The PATHFINDER (for rural delivery) is likely to be Dorset. This county partnership is more advanced than Devon's and the situation is not complicated by issues such as EU Funding (such as Obj 1 in Cornwall and Obj 2 in Devon) or having multiple Rural Renaissance (RR) programmes. It was suggested that perhaps the DRN should write to Tim Render about the decision, showing support but also perhaps prompting a response that would give more detailed reasons for the decision not to choose Devon for this pilot.

### 2. Feedback from the Summer Event (Clinton Hall, Merton, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2004)

A summary of the day's feedback was compiled as well as a full write-up of all the comments made at the workshops. It was agreed that the event had been a success in all respects. The venue and catering were praised and the feedback from members was very positive. It was also commented that events of this kind are a good opportunity for networking and building relationships between partners, which is key to the work of the DRN.

### 3. Preparations for the Sustainable Food and Farming Event on 12<sup>th</sup> October

This event is for all DRN members and it aims to further refine the SFF Action Plan for Devon. The structure of the day will be similar to the DRN summer workshop.

David Ball has agreed to speak at the event but needs to be contacted with any specific issues that need to be covered following the SFF meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September. Likewise Peter Waters from Fishleigh estate. They should both be encouraged to attend all day. **Action Ian Mercer.**

At the end of the event it is hoped that members will commit themselves to the various projects. The aim of the meeting is to establish how the SFF group will proceed with implementing the SFF Action Plan for Devon.

It was felt that the Action Plan has too many projects in it and that many of these will have to be cut out. In future the actions may need to be re-worded so that they can access RR and Obj 2 funding. There was concern over where the funding for the SFF projects is going to come from. IM indicated that some projects would not need funding whilst others were research based. However some will need funds and the members of the DRN will need to show commitment.

There was general discussing re SFF elements of RR and SB indicated that the RDA preference would be if the SFF elements were included under the two existing RR programmes, however if this proves too difficult then joint consideration between DRN and RDA would be given to a Devon wide SFF RR programme.

It was suggested that the ERDA was another potential funding source although it was felt that DEFRA should be encouraged to have amore flexible approach to which projects should be eligible for this programme. JT indicated that funding for Community Initiatives is under-applied for as is funding for Objective 2 rural regeneration. There is a Rural Task Force being set up to make sure that Objective 2 money is spent and there should be some representation from the DRN on this. **Action: Sue Smith and Sue Brownlow to investigate.**

Another role for the SFF group would be to make sure that regional groups know what is happening at a county level. – to this end DEFRA regional office should be invited – perhaps John Varley and Jeremy Pope. **Action: Ian Mercer to liaise with Kate Harris over this.**

#### 4. Rural Renaissance

It was highlighted that Rural Renaissance has a fairly narrow focus, mainly taking an economic approach and that in terms of rural development there are some important issues that would not included within this remit, for example SFF based projects.

It was suggested that perhaps a Devon-wide SFF Rural Renaissance bid could be made, linking into the Devon Market Towns Forum. However, it was felt that this would be unlikely to be approved at the moment and that while there is a need for county-wide coherence that does not necessarily mean there is a need for just one bid. There is a need to fill the gap in provision of funding for SFF type projects with a Devon wide bid if it can't be made to work through the two current geographical based programmes. SB agreed.

There was a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July between the RDA, GOSW, DRN (Michael Winter) and representatives of the the Chief Executives from both county and Teignbridge, Exeter, Mid-Devon district councils. **(Action M Winter to circulate minutes of this meeting)** The purpose of the meeting was to establish what the position is with Rural Renaissance in the Non-Objective 2 area. Misunderstandings were uncovered and partially sorted out. There is another, meeting for all of the Devon CEX's group scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> September. It is hoped that at this meeting some resolutions will be made about the approach to RR and rural delivery in Devon.

Graham Walker (Teignbridge DC) is organising a partners meeting for the non Objective 2 area on 13th September. There has been a mixed response to this meeting thus far by it was felt that the meeting should go ahead.

There were mixed feelings as to the role of the DRN. It was suggested that the DRN could potentially have the role of strategy policy overview for rural regeneration and development in Devon, under which there would be a number of delivery partnerships (such as the RR programmes) but also potentially undertake delivery where there is a gap. Some felt that the DRN should not be involved with direct delivery. However, others felt that the DRN should get involved to a certain extent, for example, in helping to complete bids. It was agreed that the outcome of the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September would be key to establishing DRN's role. It was questioned to what extent DRN would DRN steer existing RR partnerships however this is another relationship which needs to be clarified. In future perhaps those closest to the partnerships who are on the steering group can report back.

A dialogue also needs to be started with the RR programme bids to see where Devon SFF action plan fits with Devon Arc RR programme and RDA delivery plans.

The RDA confirmed that it would be willing to match fund further staff resources for the DRN to play a key role in future strategic rural delivery in Devon. DRN agreed to put a package together which sets out what resources are needed. **Action H Hillman with M Winter & DCC.**

#### 5. Re-draft of the DRN Action Programme for consultation

The DRN Action Programme was significantly amended following the feedback from the summer workshop in July. The document now focuses more on what the DRN should undertake itself and what gaps it should fill. The document is now divided into four roles for the DRN. Also in response to feedback for the summer workshop, a new column, called 'Measures' has been added which will give milestones (the title may be changed to this) and achievements that will indicate the progress being made on an issue. A glossary of terms is also to be completed.

In general, this new format for the Action Programme was approved as it was felt that it was clearer and had more relevance to the DRN. However, some specific concerns were raised. The Action Plan does not obviously relate back to the Devon Rural Strategy and this could result in the DRN losing sight of the broader issues that it should aim to tackle. In response to this HH suggested that new groups and sub groups, such as the SFF group, should be spawned and supported by the DRN to deal with these more specific issues that bear direct relevance to the Devon Rural Strategy.

It was felt that the DRN role regarding facilitation and delivery should be further clarified. It was also agreed that although members of the DRN were engaged they were not yet fully involved, and this should be rectified.

It was agreed that further comments on the revised Action Programme will be forwarded to Heather Hillman by the end of Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September so that the final draft can be sent to all DRN members for consultation by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September. It was mooted that as well as sending the final draft out to all members for consultation, perhaps it would also be wise to organise meetings with key partners for more in depth discussion.

## 6. AOB

It was agreed that the Steering Group will meet again on **November 11<sup>th</sup> 14.00, venue to be decided.**

The date for the launch of the **DRN Action Programme is December 7<sup>th</sup> at Clinton Hall, Merton.**

The date for the **SFF Workshop is 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004 at the Clinton Hall at Merton.**

The date for the **CCD Conference is 13<sup>th</sup> October at Okehampton Camp.**

Please send other dates to Heather for future inclusion at meetings.

Thanks were recorded for Geoff Bateman and the Environment Agency for the provision of lunch following the meeting!