

**Devon Rural Network
Consultation Response Action Group
Environment Agency Offices, Exminster House, 2.00 – 4.30pm
Thursday 6th October 2005**

Minutes

Attendees:

Philip Wagstaff	Churches Together in Devon
Pauline Warner	Devon CC
Lynne del Greco	SW Regional Development Agency
Martin Weiler	Environment Agency
Tissie Roberts	Exmoor National Park
Denise Ramsay	English Nature
Martyn Warren	Plymouth University Rural Futures Network
Heather Hillman	Devon Rural Network
Lisa Henry	Devon Rural Network

Apologies:

Ian Mercer (Chair)	South West Forest
Rory Cunningham	Rural Community Council of Devon
Mike Ellingham	NFU
Steve Pitcher	North Devon DC
Graham Walker	Teignbridge DC

In attendance:

Moses Warburton	Devon and Cornwall Health Authority
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1. Welcome to new members

As the CRAG is still a new group a round the table introduction took place with Martyn Warren introducing himself as a new member from the Rural Futures Network at Plymouth University. In addition Martin W explained that in Ian Mercer's absence he has been asked to chair the meeting today.

It was noted that Mike Ellingham of the NFU has retired and a replacement to represent agriculture and land use issues should be sought.

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

It was suggested that as some members initials are the same, the minutes should be written using first names and surname initials where necessary.

Pauline corrected Item 6 the timetable for the RSS.

Other than this alteration the minutes were approved a true record and all matters arising appear on the agenda.

3. Presentation by Moses Warburton on Health and Transport – Devon and Cornwall

Heather introduced Moses, she had met him at a Devon Transport Partnership meeting and felt that the work he is doing looking at Patient Transport Services for Devon and Cornwall would have particular impact upon rural areas.

Moses noted that he had been taken on to review the current service and propose solutions that are to be efficient, effective and practical. His work is due to be completed within one year and he offered to share with the group for rural proofing the proposal when it is at consultation stage.

Lisa to attach Moses' presentation with the minutes with the following notes to be read in conjunction with the slides.

- The service standards which exist today are fundamentally the same as those first created in 1948 – not necessarily appropriate to hospital practices today, for example short notice operations as beds become available, and short/ day case procedures.
- The NHS statutory duty to provide transport is based on medical need and not social or geographical constraints/ need.
- Options are being considered to utilise accessible transport vehicles used for school transport in the evenings and at weekends when they are currently idle. Also looking into a voucher system for patients in rural locations to ease the financial burden on the patients.

The following is a summary of the main points of the discussion:

- The question was asked if any thought was being put to the provision of health care closer to the patient and thereby reducing the need for transport. It was pointed out that whilst there are some services that can be delivered as out-reach services this is not practical for all procedures. Current guidelines for Doctors states that they need to be exposed to a certain level of case mix in order to continue practicing in a certain field.
- Clearly patient expectation has changed as too has the culture of Health services so it is acknowledged that new practices need to be explored to manage and meet patient expectations.

Martin thanked Moses for his time and summarised from the discussion that this piece of work would be appropriate for the group to rural proof and requested that we maintain communication with a view to rural proof the proposals when they are published.

4. Agreement of Terms of Reference

Lisa stated that these had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

They were agreed without amendment.

5. List of 'specialist support'

Lisa circulated a list of the current membership of the CRAG and asked for those present to detail their areas of expertise where they would be willing to support Heather and Lisa to complete the initial rural proofing exercise.

Lisa noted that we anticipate the commitment required by the specialist support to be approximately ½ - 1 day per document.

6. **Working examples:**
Devon County Council – Local Area Agreement
South West Regional Development Agency – Regional Economic Strategy

Heather explained that to date we have begun rural proofing two documents, namely, Devon County Council's Local Area Agreement Delivery plan (which is split into three blocks) and the Regional Economic Strategy.

Initially a decision had to be made as to how to break down the documents into manageable chunks and as the two are so different it has been recognised that the approach may vary according to the complexity, layout and detail of the document being proofed.

a) Devon County Council – Local Area Agreement

This document is split into three blocks:

Children and Young People;
Safer and Stronger Communities; and
Healthier Communities and Older People

Due to this breakdown of the document it was decided to do an overall look at the strategic criteria A – E and then for each block complete a full detailed criteria table. In the detailed criteria table only those criteria considered relevant have been left in however the logic of this was questioned in particular it means reviewing decisions at a meeting of CRAG is more difficult.

Action – all criteria to be left in the table, stating 'not relevant' if they are not to be used rather than deleting those criteria. This will help clarity for the CRAG and the recipient of the response.

It was highlighted that rural proofing detailed delivery plans is not ideal as the proposals are too in-depth and do not contain the justification and context that we need in order to rural proof effectively. In the case of the LAA the source strategic document has been published for some time 'A County for Everyone'. It was suggested that a quick retrospective rural proofing of this might be worthwhile.

Action: In the future we would want to be rural proofing source strategic documents, and only briefly proofing delivery plans to ensure they are consistent with the strategy.

Heather talked through the Children and Young People block to ensure that the group are happy with the detail and focus of comments being made. Everyone was happy with the progress made to date and thanked Heather for her hard work. As this is a very time consuming process it was suggested that Heather checks with John Smith at DCC that the comments being made would be helpful in advance of completion of the whole document. The group agreed that drawing out of common themes is a valuable activity both for the CRAG and the consultation response in its final form.

Action: Heather to quickly brief John Smith on progress and get agreement that results/ suggestions will be valuable. Decide if to continue with detailed criteria or just complete strategic criteria table.

It was noted that the submission of common themes will also aid the development of future blocks within the LAA.

b) South West Regional Development Agency – Regional Economic Strategy

This document is in two parts, strategy and delivery plan. This has assisted in the proofing process as it has been possible to look at the strategy and then ascertain how it has been interpreted into activities by cross-referencing with the delivery plan.

On the whole there was a feeling that the document takes rural issues into account and stresses the value of the environment as an economic driver which is central to the Devon Rural Strategy.

It was noted that whilst the principles of embedding rural issues at the heart of this strategy is welcomed this is a document for the Region and is not the responsibility of a single agency for delivery, therefore there is a danger that this ethos may not get carried through in all delivery

situations. It will be proposed through the consultation response that all delivery partners should have their corporate strategies rural proofed to assist in embedding this principle.

Again the group agreed with the process that was being taken.

Action: when the initial rural proofing process is complete Heather/ Lisa to circulate with a deadline for responses and a checklist of specific areas of assistance/ concern.

7. Calendar of forthcoming rural proofing exercises

Lisa tabled a calendar detailing the current consultation responses being considered. A request for notification from the group of anything they are aware of resulted in the following being highlighted:

- Patient Transport Services (as presented by Moses)
- Re-organisation of Primary Care Trust in Devon (Jill Smith Exeter PCT as contact)
- Local Transport Plan

Action: Lisa to research the above and add them to the calendar. It was proposed that we continue to request presentations of documents by the drafting body where appropriate.

8. Paper to be tabled at Steering Group meeting 12th October

This was agreed as a suitable request and Philip agreed to present this paper at the Steering Group meeting on 12th October.

Action: Philip to present CRAG paper at the forthcoming Steering Group meeting.

9. AOB

There were no items raised.

10. Date of next meeting

Next meeting to be held at County Hall (room tbc) at 2pm Wednesday 7th December.
(RES Consultation period ends on Friday 9th December.)