

Devon Rural Network Terms of Reference

The Network

The Devon Rural Network (DRN) was set up by a Devon Rural Task Group under the auspices of the Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP). It was launched by Lord Haskins in July 2003 at the same time as the publication of the Devon Rural Strategy which is the DRN's main policy guidance document. Its day to day work is governed by an Action Programme. The DRN reports annually through its representative on the DSP. Devon County Council (DCC) hosts the DRN and acts as its accountable body under a service level agreement.

Purpose:

- To provide a coherent, united voice for rural Devon in order to:
 - highlight perceived priorities
 - provide lobbying potential and influencing messages as necessary
 - work to counter the effects of external policy which are inimical to Devon
- To lead and co-ordinate partnership working and engagement in rural Devon
- To take a strategic view of rural issues, expressing it through continual refinement of the Devon Rural Strategy
- To co-ordinate implementation of solutions to rural issues and maximise opportunities within rural areas and communities, as outlined in the DRN Action Programme

And to those ends:

- Support partnerships which benefit the rural community with information, advice and examples of good practice
- Maintain a County wide network of contacts and facilitate links with similar organisations elsewhere
- Collate and disseminate research and policy to members
- Form Action groups to implement the DRN Action Programme and other programmes as appropriate
- Provide a (Devonian) rural proofing process for all policy proposals affecting rural Devon
- Aim for subsidiarity – encouraging action at the most appropriate level, and reducing duplication and competition to the minimum

Membership:

- Membership is open to organisations, agencies and partnerships at all levels, statutory and otherwise, working and supporting rural life in Devon. It is not open to individuals or individual private businesses.
- Membership of the DRN is by subscription. The standard annual amount is £25 under normal circumstances. However the Management Advisory Group may grant concessions as appropriate, and especially to organisations run entirely by volunteers.
- Membership is for one year (or part thereof) running from 1st April to 31st March
- Members share information, network, and make their voices heard. There is a website, a minimum of four newsletters per year, an AGM and at least two conferences or seminars.
- Funding partners are those member organisations who contribute to the DRN, either through cash or in kind services such as provision of meeting rooms etc, to a sum in excess of £500 per year.

Members' commitment

Members agree to:

- Supply up to date details for the DRN contacts database and abide by these Terms of Reference.
- Work together as effectively and efficiently as possible to deliver the agreed aims of the DRN – while respecting the views of all members.
- Promote inclusivity - operating and promoting equality of opportunity and involvement of all.

- Assist the Network's core to focus on strategic issues that need to be delivered or co-ordinated at a Devon-wide level
- Promote the Devon "cause" at Regional, National and European level whenever possible
- Develop the partnerships necessary to deliver the Devon Rural Strategy and the DRN Action Programme

Structure:

There will be a **President** of the DRN who will chair an AGM held in March. The President will normally be invited to serve by the PSG

Policy Steering Group

- The Membership of the Policy Steering Group (PSG) will be agreed by the membership of the Network at the AGM. It will be drawn from the environmental, social/community, and economic sectors, keeping a balance between statutory agencies, private sector and voluntary bodies, and as far as possible between the natural areas of Devon
- The maximum number of members shall be 25. There must be at least 3 members representing each of the sectors, and three representatives of each of the statutory, business and voluntary fields
- Nominations to the PSG may be put forward by sectors and the PSG itself to be received 2 weeks in advance of the AGM and will be voted on, if necessary, by members in attendance at that event
- There is no restriction on time served on the PSG or as Chairman of it, nor on the number of times a member can be re-appointed
- If a member of the PSG stands down a replacement may be co-opted until a new appointment can be made at the next AGM
- The PSG will normally meet quarterly, but as necessary when circumstances demand it
- The PSG will appoint a chairman at its first meeting following the AGM. The chairman will act as chairman of the DRN when necessary
- The PSG will appoint up to five representatives to serve on a Management Advisory Group.

Management Advisory Group

The Management Advisory Group (MAG) will support the PSG between its meetings, work on the detail of action plans, develop ideas to promote the DRN and establish its identity. It will provide support for the staff of the DRN with the development of ideas, solutions and recommendations and will agree the best use of resources at the DRN's disposal to facilitate the work of the network. It will deal with staff matters within the DRN's remit and maintain a memorandum of understanding with the DCC and where necessary with other appropriate bodies.

Staff

- A (DRN) Co-ordinator will be responsible for organising all aspects of the day to day running of the DRN and its activities, and for representing the DRN on appropriate officer groups.
- The Co-ordinator will lead other staff of the DRN appointed as necessary
- The Co-ordinator will ensure the maintenance of a record of all meetings and decisions of the AGM, PSG and the MAG
- The Co-ordinator will represent the DRN at appropriate meetings