

**Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum
Management Group**

Minutes of Meeting on 14th December 2010 at NFU Offices, York

Present	
Tony Pexton	Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum (Chairman)
Gary Fielding	North Yorkshire Rural Partnership / York & North Yorkshire Functional Sub-Region
Councillor Trevor Bagshaw	Sheffield City Region
Derek Martin	Sheffield Functional Sub-Region
Steve Willis	Food and Farming Forum
Cath Lee	Federation of Small Businesses
Richard Ellison	National Farmers' Union
David Shaw	Natural England
John Hoare	Council for the Protection of Rural England
Janet Thornton	Rural Action Yorkshire / Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council
Shelagh Marshall	Social Sector (Yorkshire and The Humber Forum on Ageing)
Howard Petch	Commission for Rural Communities
Helen Wright	Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum (Executive Manager)
Helen Reynolds	Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum (Support Officer)
Apologies	
Dave Melling	West Yorkshire Rural Partnership / Leeds Functional Sub-Region
Pauline Teale	Yorkshire Forward
David Wilford	Government Office Yorkshire and The Humber
Graham Ward	Sustainable Development Board

Ag. It. / Min.		Action
1 / 39	Welcome and Introduction	
	Tony Pexton, the Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular the newly appointed representatives for the Sheffield Functional Sub-Region Region, Councillor Trevor Bagshaw - who has taken-over from Councillor Cynthia Ransome - and Derek Martin - the officer representative for the Sheffield Functional Sub-Region.	
2 / 40	Minutes of Meeting held on 14th September 2010	

	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.	
3 / 41	Matters Arising	
	<p>Minute 27 - The Government's Programme and Comprehensive Spending Review Framework</p> <p>A report was circulated which looks in more detail at the impact of the new Government's Programme on rural communities and the current position within the Region. Details in respect of North Yorkshire had now been added to those for the Humber. The importance of getting coverage for the Region was emphasised. Comments from West Yorkshire are awaited and an invitation was extended to South Yorkshire to add their comments. The Chairman confirmed that this is work in progress. Comments received from members included the need to include other statutory agencies in the next steps. The question was asked about <i>who</i> the report is directed at and <i>how</i> the RAF may actually influence. It was noted that the point of the report is to promote discussion and not necessarily influence at this stage; <i>rural</i> needs a strong voice, developing policies and input from appropriate bodies.</p> <p>Action: West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire to provide details on the impact of the new Government's Programme in respect of their rural areas.</p> <p>Minute 21 - Rural Affairs Forum - Communications</p> <p>The Chairman outlined briefly the background to work on the RAF leaflet and Website and the current financial aspects. The leaflet has now been produced; a copy was circulated to members for information. A PDF copy is being put on the Website. This work has been drawn-out due to financial restrictions on government spending since Spring 2010. The go-ahead has now been given to have 1000 copies printed. The Chairman intends to write to all Council Leaders and include a copy of the leaflet for information. Printed copies will be available at the next Forum for members. The Website is also currently being overhauled with the help of Fenweb. An overall refreshment and update is being organised by the Support Officer. The aim is to make the site shorter and sharper with links to key partner sites and organisations - so making it more cost effective.</p> <p>Action: Chairman to write to Council Leaders outlining the ongoing work of the RAF, and enclosing RAF Leaflet.</p> <p>Minute 22 - Rural Affairs Forum Meetings</p> <p>The Chairman gave brief details in respect of the format of the Forum Meetings, raising the question of how to ensure that information is documented. It was noted that points captured from the meetings are put on the Website - and that from time-to-time, eg work on the Uplands, information is captured and used</p>	<p>WYRP / SFS-R</p> <p>Chairman</p>

<p>more formally. It was agreed that it would be useful to progress a piece of work - possibly in the form of an Annual Report - to capture the main findings from the Forum Meetings. It was suggested that David Farnsworth may be able to contribute to this work.</p> <p>Action: That consideration be given to the preparation of an Annual Report which incorporates key findings from the Forum Meetings held throughout 2010/11.</p> <p>Minute 30 - Local Enterprise Partnerships - The Regional Picture and Implications for the Rural Affairs Forum Members gave an update in respect of the development of LEPs in the Region. Leeds and Sheffield have been approved, York and North Yorkshire are expectant that approval will come in the near future and the Humber area still does not have approval. There has been a <i>Rural Roundtable</i> in relation to the Leeds City-Region LEP, which is helping to ensure that rural issues are not neglected. At this stage, the RDPE will not be the responsibility of LEPs. It was noted that the LEPs will be private sector led. The timetables for activity are still unclear - as are many aspects of the Regional Growth Fund. Members were asked if they felt the Management Group needed to meet on a more regular basis to keep-up with changes and to ensure that the rural element is not forgotten. It was agreed that there may be a role for the RAF within the emerging LEPs to influence on rural issues - although it was noted that there are currently three sub-regional rural partnerships which may undertake a similar role. There was discussion around how this might be taken forward; it was felt that further information is needed about the individual LEPs so that further progress could be made. The Executive Manager drew attention to a report recently produced by the Commission for Rural Communities on rural aspects of LEP activity.</p> <p>Action: Functional Sub-Regional Rural Partnership representatives to keep the Executive Manager informed of progress on the development of the LEPs, including details of chairs and members.</p> <p>Action: Chairman to write to Leaders and Chief Executives of Local Authorities to emphasise the need to ensure that rural issues are taken on-board in LEP activity and outlining the role which the RAF can play in helping to ensure this is achieved.</p> <p>Minute 32: Autumn Conference - <i>The Implications of the Government's Programme for Rural Communities</i> The Executive Manager reported that the Government Office has given the go ahead for an event to be funded. It was suggested that a Task & Finish Group should be set-up to plan an event for the Spring. Feedback from members tended to suggest that the</p>	<p>Executive Manager</p> <p>HRP / NYRP / WYRP</p> <p>Chairman</p>
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	<p>time was not perhaps right for a large-scale conference - and that the RAF could possibly parachute into other organised events.</p> <p>Action: Consideration be given to the setting-up of a Task & Finish Group to organise a conference in the Spring.</p>	Executive Manager
4 / 42	Ministerial Meeting and Meeting with Government Office Yorkshire and The Humber	
	The Chairman briefly reported on the recent ministerial meetings - there is nothing definite to report at this stage in respect of the future of the RAF.	
5 / 43	The Future of the Yorkshire & The Humber Rural Affairs Forum - Open Discussion	
	<p>An open discussion took place around the future of the RAF and what might be the role of such a body. There was discussions about the achievements of the RAF - and recognition about the difficulties of measuring success. The question of funding was discussed. It was recognised that any long-term future for the RAF may need to be considered in the context of no funding or very limited funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following points were generally supported - • The RAF should continue to influence and retain its values and objectives. • The RAF should look at the priorities that affect the Region. • Collective knowledge of members can be used to influence upwards and downwards working through other local partnerships; these are much wider than the LEPs. • The RAF can help to demonstrate the positive things which rural areas can offer to urban areas. • The RAF is an important body and provides a useful opportunity for rural issues to be represented. <p>The overwhelming view of members was that the RAF should continue and that there is a need for it into the future. There was uncertainty about the situation after March 2011. The Executive Manager gave an update on funding in respect on 2011/12 - noting that there would currently be no money from Defra for next year, but that monies from Yorkshire Forward for the third year of the programme would be honoured. At present, no monies could be carried-over. The matter of funding is to be considered at the next meeting of the Chairmen. It was agreed that it is sensible to continue working and planning up to the end of March 2011. It was also agreed that a Task & Finish Group should be convened to look at future funding and future plans for the RAF; the RAF's values and objectives remain the same - how it works to influence may need to change.</p> <p>Action: A Task & Finish Group be convened to look at future funding of the RAF and ways in which it might continue in the future.</p>	Executive Manager

6 / 44	Management Group - Sub-Groups / Task & Finish Groups / Affiliated Partnerships: Progress	
	<p>(i) Finance Sub-Group A financial summary paper was circulated to members for information. The Finance Sub-Group is due to meet in January 2011.</p> <p>(ii) Functional Sub-Regional Rural Partnerships Task & Finish Group The FSRRP Sub-Group has met three times. The last meeting was poorly attended due to the bad weather. Work is continuing to provide Briefing Papers on key topics. Ellen Green of Serco gave a presentation on the Welfare-to-Work Programme - emphasising the importance of ensuring that the needs of rural communities were met. The meeting has been re-scheduled for 21st January 2011; an invitation to attend was extended to Councillor Bagshaw.</p> <p>(iii) Rural Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group The Group met in August 2010 to look at issues and options in respect of the provision of affordable housing in rural areas. The paper on the outcomes will be circulated to members.</p> <p>(iv) Rural Crime Councillor Bagshaw updated on progress on setting-up the Group - reminding members that Councillor Ransome had requested that a Task & Finish Group should be convened to look at Rural Crime. It was now felt that at present it would be better to establish a Rural Partnership for South Yorkshire. Some members felt that rural crime is a key issue and should be considered. It was noted that there are a number of Safer Communities Forums - and that some RAF members may also sit on these Forums. It was agreed that the Task & Finish Group would be put on-hold for the time-being and revisited at a later date if appropriate.</p> <p>Action: Councillor Bagshaw to inform Councillor Ransome that the Rural Crime Task & Finish Group has been put on-hold for the time-being.</p> <p>(v) Food and Farming Partnership Steve Willis updated on the Food and Farming Partnership - highlighting the Careers Advisory Event held in November. It had been a successful event, with an extensive number of careers advisors and local businesses attending. The event had been based on a green theme. The aim of the event is to encourage high achievers into the food and farming sector. Following positive feedback it is planned to run the event again in October 2011. St. Aidan's School in Harrogate had attended and wants to hold its own event early in 2012. The RAF was thanked for its</p>	Councillor Bagshaw

	<p>sponsorship of the event. The first social event held at the Yorkshire Agricultural Society for young farmers and college students to network had also taken place in November. It as hoped this would now take place on a regular basis.</p>	
7 / 45	<p>Responses to Consultations</p>	
	<p>An Invitation to Shape the Nature of England - Discussion Document: Consultation by Defra The Response to Consultations Paper on the Nature of England, submitted on behalf of the RAF, was circulated to members for information.</p>	
8 / 46	<p>Rural Affairs Forum - Meeting on 9th November 2010 / Future Meetings</p>	
	<p>The Executive Manager reported that the notes from the meeting of the RAF on 9th November 2010 which looked at the potential effects of the Government's new programmes and the Comprehensive Spending Review on rural communities have been completed and will be posted on the website.</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the RAF on 1st February 2011 would look at the Planning and Localism Bill - and include the first report from the Task & Finish Group on the future funding and direction of the RAF.</p> <p>Action: Executive Manager to arrange for the meeting of the Rural Affairs Forum on 1st February 2011 to look at the Localism and Planning Bill.</p>	Executive Manager
9 / 47	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
	<p>(i) Post Offices Shelagh Marshall reported on a government report on the future uses for post offices. It was reported that Sheffield Council is running a pilot project aimed at saving rural post offices. It was agreed that an item on post offices be included on the Agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p>Action: Executive Manager to include item on the Agenda for the meeting of the Management Group on 15th March 2011 on rural post offices.</p> <p>(ii) South Yorkshire Rural Partnership John Hoare outlined his thoughts on the need for a South Yorkshire Rural Partnership. He reported that he is currently in discussion with Sheffield City-Region about the possibility of establishing a Rural Partnership in South Yorkshire. The Executive Manager said that it had long been the hope of the RAF that such a partnership could be created and offered to facilitate a meeting at which best practice from other Rural Partnerships could be shared.</p>	Executive Manager

	Action: Executive Manager and John Hoare to facilitate a meeting with representatives from South Yorkshire and existing Rural Partnerships to progress the setting-up of a South Yorkshire Rural Partnership.	Executive Manager / John Hoare
10 / 48	Date of Next Meeting	
	15th March 2011 at 10.00am Venue - NFU Offices, York	