



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

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

**Present**

Tony Pexton	Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum (Chairman)
Cllr Symon Fraser	Humber Rural Partnership / Functional Sub-Region
Dave Melling	West Yorkshire Rural Partnership / Leeds Functional Sub-Region
Cllr Peter Sowray	North Yorkshire Rural Partnership / York & North Yorkshire Functional Sub-Region
Gary Fielding	North Yorkshire Rural Partnership / York & North Yorkshire Functional Sub-Region
Cllr Cynthia Ransome	Sheffield Functional Sub-Region
Pauline Teale	Yorkshire Forward
Mike Feist	Government Office Yorkshire and The Humber
Steve Willis	Food and Farming Forum
Cath Lee	Federation of Small Businesses
Richard Ellison	NFU
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
Graham Ward	Sustainable Development Board
Helen Wright	Yorkshire and The Humber Rural Affairs Forum (Executive Manager)
Helen Reynolds	Yorkshire and the Humber Rural Affairs Forum (Support Officer)

**Apologies**

Kelly Jevons	Local Government Yorkshire and Humber
Peter Nottage	Natural England

Ag. It. / Min.		Action
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1/25	<p><b>Welcome and Introduction</b></p> <p>Tony Pexton, the Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Councillor Cynthia Ransome on behalf of Sheffield Functional Sub-Region, who has taken over from Councillor Walker.</p>	
2 / 26	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting held on 22nd June 2010</b></p>	
	<p>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.</p>	
3 / 27	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p>	
	<p><b>Minute 17 - The Government's Programme &amp; the Government's Spending Review Framework</b></p> <p>A report was circulated on the implications for rural areas of the new Government's Programme which highlighted issues in respect of the Humber Sub-Region and suggested some next steps for information. The report is a further refinement of a paper considered by the Group at an earlier meeting. It was noted that priorities will vary for area to area. It was agreed that the report should be extended to incorporate similar information for the other Sub-Regions - so that there was a regional picture. This would help to inform the RAF's activities as things move forward. It was proposed that a fourth column should be added so that the implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review could be added.</p> <p><b>Action: Sub-Regional Rural Partnerships to provide information in the correct format for the report on the implications of the Government's Programmes for rural areas for the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Executive Manager to add fourth column to the report on the implications of the Government's Programmes for rural areas. to incorporate the implications to the Comprehensive Spending Review.</b></p> <p><b>Minute 18 - Audit Commission - Rural Issues</b></p> <p>It was reported that the Audit Commission has been abolished by the Government.</p> <p><b>Minute 21 - Rural Affairs Forum - Communications</b></p> <p>Under new government guidance, it has been difficult to progress as planned in respect of communications ie development of the website and production of the leaflet. The Chairman noted that the leaflet can be web-based and positively presented to parish councils and other rural advocates to raise profile and give information - rather than it being advertising, which is currently not permitted expenditure. GOYH confirmed that in respect of Defra funding the RAF would need exemption from Defra to proceed with development of the website. The current Terms of</p>	<p>WYRP / NYRP / SFS-R</p> <p>Executive Manager</p>

	<p>Reference specify the use of Fenweb for maintenance and development of the site. It was proposed by the Chairman that the costs of refreshing the website should be investigated - on the basis that information on a website cannot be out-of-date - with a view to further development after the Comprehensive Spending Review. It was agreed in principle that the website should be refreshed and that the leaflet should be finalised.</p> <p><b>Action: Executive Manager to progress production of leaflet and look into costings / progress refresh of website.</b></p> <p><b>Minute 22 - Rural Affairs Forum Meetings</b>  An update on the pilot to capture an enhanced report from Forum meetings was given. Members had agreed in principle to the pilot. There had been unforeseen problems around procurement and the actual financing of the work. In light of this, it was proposed that David Farnsworth - who would be undertaking the work - is paid overtime within his current post at East Riding of Yorkshire Council to carry-out a pieces of work on the Forum meeting which looked at upland issues. The Chairman felt this was a sensible way forward. Comment was made on the importance on capturing the right information discussed at the meetings with actions indentified which can be taken forward by the RAF in order to influence policy makers etc. It was confirmed the costs would be based on his current salary - and that it would be around seven days work.</p> <p>The Executive Manager reported that a letter of support in respect of the Commission for Rural Communities report on the uplands had been sent from the RAF to Defra - as agreed at the Forum meeting.</p> <p><b>Action: Paper on the uplands capturing discussions at the Forum meeting to be produced by David Farnsworth.</b></p>	<p>Executive Manager / Support Officer</p> <p>Executive Manager / DF</p>
4 / 28	<p><b>Rural Affairs Forum - Review of Membership</b></p> <p>A review of the membership had been completed. A final list of organisations and individual forum members was circulated to members. Members were asked to submit names of any additional individuals / organisations they felt should be included. It was suggested that the Yorkshire &amp; The Humber Stakeholders Group could usefully be invited to join the Forum.</p> <p><b>Action: The Yorkshire and The Humber Stakeholders Group (Nick Pontone) to be invited to join the Forum.</b></p>	<p>Executive Manager / Support Officer</p>
5 / 29	<p><i>Maximising the Rural Potential in Yorkshire and the Humber</i>  - Supplementary Papers: Rural Transport</p>	

	<p>A report on Rural Transport was circulated to members for information. The paper was one of a set of papers being produced by RAFs across the country for the meeting of the RAF Chairs with the Defra Minister on 21<sup>st</sup> September. This paper looking at experiences, innovation, good practice and future issues had been produced jointly with the South-West RAF. It was proposed that the briefing paper could be used as a model for other issues. It was noted that discretionary spend on some services will be targeted and the need to do for more for less will need to be stressed.</p> <p>It was noted that the RAFs are a key body providing independent evidence on rural issues now that the CRC, GOs and RDAs are being abolished.</p> <p>The following comments were made by members -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <i>clear aim</i> is not sufficiently highlighted - nor are issues around community transport and the different users and providers.</li> <li>• Short-term funding is still an issue.</li> <li>• Access to rail / park and ride hubs is important.</li> <li>• LTP3 is being produced as a major investment plan for next 5 years.</li> <li>• Changing habits and behaviours is pivotal in the use of public transport options.</li> <li>• Options to aid rural areas and to access services more and the need to have regard to sustainability and carbon foot-prints.</li> <li>• Major impediments associated with insurance / costs to car sharing.</li> <li>• Strengthen bike transport as an alternative method of transport. The issue of roads, the fabric of the roads and maintenance of rural roads in particular could be a major issue if spending is cut. There should be more salting of rural roads during the winter months.</li> <li>• There is an increased need for cars in rural areas.</li> </ul>	
6 / 30	<p><b>Local Enterprise Partnerships - The Regional Picture and Implications for the Rural Affairs Forum</b></p>	
	<p>The Executive Manager briefly explained that, as she understood it, LEP bids have been submitted on behalf of (1) Leeds City-Region, (2) Sheffield City-Region, (3) Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire and Scarborough, (4) York and North Yorkshire. North and North East Lincolnshire have submitted a proposal for a Humber LEP. Gary Fielding reported that a York and North Yorkshire LEP had been proposed along with one for the seven North Yorkshire Districts and City of York - and to incorporate Scar borough. The situation is complex – with cross-boundary proposals and issues. The LEP submitted by the Sheffield area</p>	

	<p>incorporates a vast area including Sheffield, North Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire. Richard Ellison reported that the NFU has written to all local authorities in connection with the LEPs and agriculture. It was noted that the LEPs are still very much work in progress and that the situation remains fluid. It was agreed that the RAF should consider ways in which it can influence the LEPs in respect of rural business engagement etc.</p> <p><b>Action: Consideration be given to the role of the RAF in relation to Local Enterprise Partnerships and ways in which it could effectively influence their work to the benefits of rural areas.</b></p>	<p>Chairman / Executive Manager</p>
7 / 31	<b>Rural Coalition Report - Rural Challenges</b>	
	<p>A report - <i>Rural Challenges</i> - produced by the Rural Coalition (chaired by Matthew Taylor) was circulated to members for information. The report looks at how the Government at every level can empower rural communities, increase local and national sustainability in the context of climate change, conserve the open countryside to ensure environmental security, food security and access to the countryside for all and how all this can be delivered at less cost to the taxpayer than the existing approach to rural development.. It was noted that these are key issue for RAF also.. East Riding of Yorkshire Council is progressing a paper on the Report. There was support for the bodies that had come together to form the Rural Coalition - recognising that the report potentially provides a mechanism for some significant actions to move forward.</p>	
8 / 32	<b>Autumn Conference - The Implications of the Government's Programme for Rural Communities</b>	
	<p>The Executive Manager outlined thoughts on a possible conference / event to be facilitated by the RAF to look at the implications of the Government's Programme for rural communities. It was proposed and agreed in principle that an event should be held next Spring picking-up the new programmes, the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the wider rural agenda. It was agreed that a Task &amp; Finish Group be set up to plan and facilitate the event - and that members interested in joining the Task &amp; Finish Group should contact the Executive Manager.</p> <p><b>Action: The Executive Manager to convene a Task &amp; Finish Group to plan and facilitate a conference / event in Spring 2011 on the implications of the Government's Programmes for rural communities.</b></p> <p>Other planned events were discussed including</p> <p><b>(i) Skills and Training Seminar</b> The Executive Manager reported that further to the May meeting of</p>	<p>Executive Manager</p>

	<p>the RAF on Young People and the Countryside, a skills and training seminar has been planned for mid-November. Working with Lantra and the land-based colleges, the event would look at the gaps and blockages to skills and training across the land-skills sector.</p> <p><b>(ii) Food and Farming Careers Conference</b>  Steve Willis briefly explained about the forthcoming Food and Farming Careers Conference to be held at Askham Bryan College on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2010. The RAF is supporting the event financially. The conference will focus on careers advisors and how they promote the industry to learners.</p>	
9 / 33	<b>Rural Crime - Councillor Ransome, Sheffield Functional Sub-Region</b>	
	<p>The Chairman introduced Cllr. Ransome. Cllr Ransome led discussions on how rural crime affects the Region - raising the question about whether there is a role for the RAF. She highlighted concerns around rural crime and the lack of reporting in respect of rural land and business crimes. Comment was made that most rural crime is now <i>organised</i>. The need for landowners and businesses in remote rural areas to have access to technologies to speed-up tracking, reporting and solving crimes was also highlighted. Concern was expressed about the incidents of crime against rural businesses due to vandalism and the implications which cuts in spending on policing may have on rural communities. It was proposed and agreed that Cllr. Ransome should lead a Task &amp; Finish Group on Rural Crime and that members interested in joining the Task &amp; Finish Group should contact Cllr. Ransome.</p> <p><b>Action: Councillor Ransome to host a Task &amp; Finish Group on Rural Crime.</b></p>	Cllr. Ransome
10 / 34	<b>Management Group - Sub Groups / Task &amp; Finish Groups / and Affiliated Partnerships: Progress</b>	
	<p><b>(i) Finance Sub-Group</b>  The Executive manager gave an update on the Finance Sub-Group. It was reported that it had met in August. A summary of accounts was circulated to members for information.</p> <p><b>(ii) Functional Sub-Regional Rural Partnerships Task &amp; Finish Group</b>  The Executive Manager updated on progress with the Functional Sub-Regional Rural Partnerships Task &amp; Finish Group. The Group has met twice. At the last meeting it was agreed that each of the partnerships would lead on a key issue from the refresh of the Regional Rural Framework and that this could then be fed into ongoing development of the Framework. West Yorkshire Rural Partnership is to look at the economic and business aspect, the Humber Rural Partnership - transport (this work has already been completed) and environment, North Yorkshire Rural Partnership - broadband and Bill Cross (covering South</p>	

	<p>Yorkshire) - communities. Janet Thornton - through the Community and Housing Task &amp; Finish Group - is looking at housing. This work will enable the RAF to capture rural activity at a local level.</p> <p><b>(iii) Upland Communities Report Task &amp; Finish Group</b> The Executive Manager updated on the Upland Communities Task &amp; Finish Group. A meeting was held on 2nd September 2010 to collate views on the Commission for Rural Communities Report on upland communities so that a letter of support for the Report could be sent to Defra.</p> <p><b>(iv) Affordable Rural Housing Task &amp; Finish Group</b> Janet Thornton is organising a first meeting of the Communities and Rural Housing Task &amp; Finish Group to look at affordable rural housing in October.</p> <p><b>(v) Food and Farming Partnership</b> Steve Willis outlined progress with the Food and Farming Forum. In conjunction with the Career Advisory Service, the Forum is holding an event to promote land-based careers. In addition, a Young Farmers Collaborative is being set-up with the first meeting to be held in October.</p>	
<b>11 / 35</b>	<b>Responses to Consultations</b>	
	Responses to consultations on Local Enterprise Partnerships and the Regional Growth Fund were circulated for information - and noted.	
<b>12 / 36</b>	<b>Rural Affairs Forum - Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 / Future Meetings</b>	
	<p>Notes from the meeting of the RAF which looked at upland issues on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 were circulated for information. These notes have been put on the Website.</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010 should look at the Government's new programmes and the Comprehensive Spending Review and implications for rural areas. It was suggested that Ivan Annibal from Rural Services Network could speak.</p> <p><b>Action: Executive Manager to arrange for a future meeting of the Rural Affairs Forum to consider the Government's Programmes and the Comprehensive Spending Review and implications for rural areas.</b></p>	<b>Executive Manager</b>
<b>13 / 37</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	<p><b>(i) Bathing Waters Directive Partnership</b> The Chairman briefly explained the background to the Bathing Waters Directive Partnership. Yorkshire Water and Welcome to</p>	

	<p>Yorkshire are currently working together with the aim of producing 10 blue flag beaches between Scarborough and Spurn Point. The Chairman sits on the Board on behalf of the RAF advising on rural areas and tourism issue. The Executive Manager sits on the Working Group with the same remit.</p> <p><b>(ii) Mike Feist</b> Mike Feist reported that he is retiring from his post at the Government Office at the end of October. David Wilford will succeed him on the RAF for the foreseeable future. The Chairman and members thanked Mike for his work and commitment to the work of the RAF.</p> <p><b>(iii) Yorkshire Forward</b> Pauline Teale reported that Yorkshire Forward had issued voluntary redundancy applications to staff. Those that take-up the offer will finish employment on 22nd October 2010. There is likely to be further redundancies made in March 2011 and July 2011. It is thought that Yorkshire Forward will cease as an organisation in its current format by March 2012.</p>	
<b>14 / 38</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	<b>14th December 2010 at 10.00am</b> <b>Venue - NFU Offices, York.</b>	