



## MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

**9.30am Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

Asfordby Parish Hall, 24 Main Street, Asfordby, Nr Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 3SA

# AGENDA

Paper Marked

1. Introductions and Apologies
2. Minutes and Matters Arising of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September A
3. **Vibrant Villages: mid-programme delivery update** (presentation)
4. **Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council: Essex Rural Commission** (verbal report)
5. **INSPIRE Leicestershire: delivery arrangements** B
6. **East Midlands Rural Framework and RDPE Regional Implementation Plan** C
7. **Sub-Regional Food and Drink Co-ordinator** D
8. **Leicestershire Together Update** (verbal update)
9. **Sub Regional Arrangements / MAA** (verbal update)
10. **Communications Update (EC Delegation, distribution of papers)** E
11. **Items referred from the LRP Strategy and Performance Group** F
12. Any Other Business.

Dates of future LRP Management Board Meetings (2009-10)

18th March, 17th June, 16th September, 9th December

All Board Meetings start at 9.30am unless otherwise stated

# LEICESTERSHIRE TOGETHER CONFERENCE 2009

## LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL PARTNERSHIP: MELTON PROJECT TOUR

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

24 Main Street, Asfordby, Nr Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 3SA

### PROGRAMME

- 11:45 Refreshments and buffet lunch
- 12:00 Welcome and Introduction to the Leicestershire Rural Partnership
- 12:15 Depart for **Brocklebys Farm Shop**, Asfordby ([www.brocklebys.co.uk](http://www.brocklebys.co.uk))
- 1:00 Depart for **Belvoir Brewery**, Old Dalby ([www.belvoirbrewery.co.uk](http://www.belvoirbrewery.co.uk))
- 2:10 Depart for **Walton Thorns Holiday Cottages and Rural Centre**, nr Six Hills ([www.waltonthorns.co.uk](http://www.waltonthorns.co.uk))
- 2:45 Depart for **Rearsby Village Hall**

Return to Asfordby Parish Hall by 3.30pm at latest and Depart

## LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT BOARD

7<sup>th</sup> December 2009

### **INSPIRE LEICESTERSHIRE – DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Management Board on delivery arrangements for the INSPIRE Leicestershire programme following approval of the programme by emda.

#### **Background**

2. To support the delivery of the Local Area Agreement and Multi Area Agreement within the new sub-regional governance arrangements for economic development the LRP have developed the Rural Economy Support Programme. This will deliver elements of the LRP's Rural Economy Priorities, 2009-12.
3. Specific elements of the programme include:
  - Town and Centres Business Partnership Development (worth £167k)
  - Business Growth and Sustainable Communities (worth £65k)
  - Infrastructure Investment Grants (worth £974k)
4. Following endorsement of this project by the Leadership Board as part of the Sub-Regional Investment Programme a full application was submitted to emda on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009. On 20<sup>th</sup> October emda's Board Resources Group endorsed the programme with the following conditions.
  - Emda to agree eligibility criteria for grant schemes ahead of first claim being submitted.
  - Small grant schemes are subject to State Aid rules and therefore should be delivered within *de minimus* limits
  - Full profile breakdown of funding available through the Partnership Fund to be submitted to emda
  - Specific details of local authority in-kind time to be submitted to emda.
  - Business Link branding to be included across programme documentation. The programme, however, will not be part of the Solutions for Business portfolio
  - Mid-programme evaluation to be contracted soon after programme commencement to ensure an agreed baseline.
5. On 16<sup>th</sup> November the joint Vibrant Villages and INSPIRE Leicestershire Implementation Group considered the delivery arrangements for the programme. Primarily, attention was given to delivery of the Infrastructure Investment Grants element of the programme. At this meeting it was agreed to undertake the following
  - Further refinement of the funding criteria for the Infrastructure Investment Grants based on comments made
  - Circulate the job description and person specification for the Rural Economy Support Officer for agreement.

- The LRP's Communications Group will consider the promotion of the new programme. Once plans have been finalised the Management Board will be invited to promote INSPIRE.
  - Further consideration will be given to the delivery arrangements for the Town and Centres Business Partnership Development and Business Growth and Sustainable Communities strands
6. The Implementation Group will agree final delivery arrangements for Infrastructure Investment Grant stand of INSPIRE shortly and delivery. Interim arrangements to deliver this element are in place ahead of the appointment of the Rural Economy Support Officer. Once agreed there will be a soft launch of the programme with priority given to a number of potential applicants who have already expressed an interest. There will be a formal launch in the New Year. Further consideration will be given to the delivery of other elements of the programme.
7. A meeting was held with emda's business support unit on the 25<sup>th</sup> November to consider the delivery arrangements for INSPIRE. It was agreed with emda that there will be joint branding of the Rural Business Advice Fairs undertaken through the programme.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the LRP Management Board:

- i) Note this update report on the delivery arrangements for the INPSIRE Leicestershire programme

### **Officers to contact:**

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## **LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

### **EAST MIDLANDS RURAL FRAMEWORK AND RDPE RURAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Management Board on the development of two regional rural consultation documents - EMRAF's final draft of the Rural Framework and RDPE Rural Implementation Plan – and seek agreement for the LRP response to the latter.

#### **EMRAF Rural Framework**

2. The East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum (EMRAF) is in the process of reviewing the East Midlands Rural Framework (previously called the Rural Action Plan). The first draft was launched at the EMRAF Rural Conference in June.
3. The new Rural Framework is being developed around four strategic themes. These are identified below.
  - Sustainable and Inclusive Communities (including Housing)
  - A Thriving Rural Economy
  - Quality Services Accessible to All
  - High Quality Rural Environment
4. At its last meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> September the LRP Management Board endorsed comments on the first draft of the Rural Framework which were submitted to EMRAF for their considerations
5. A final draft of the Rural Framework was made available on the 20<sup>th</sup> November. This is available on EMRAF's website at <http://www.ruralaffairs.org.uk/rap.php>. This Framework document includes priority objectives against each strategic theme. Within the document there is no inclusion of actions. The EMRAF sub-groups have been tasked with undertaking the detailed implementation planning, against each of the priority objectives.
6. LRP officers drafted a response to the final draft of Rural Framework and circulated this to all members of the LRP Strategy and Performance Groups and the Management Board for their comment. To meet the agreed deadline for responses LRP comments were submitted on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December. This response will be published on the LRP's Oakleaves website at [www.oakleaves.org.uk/consultationresponses.html](http://www.oakleaves.org.uk/consultationresponses.html)
7. The final Rural Framework will be signed off at the EMRAF Operations Group at their meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009. The final version to be printed and launched in January 2010. The Management Board will be informed when the final Rural Framework is available.

### **RDPE Regional Implementation Plan**

8. The RDPE is jointly funded by the EU, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the Government. The RDPE 2007-2013 in England has a budget of £3.9 billion. This is more than double the budget available for the previous programme which ran from 2000-2006. £3.3bn of the total budget will be allocated to agri-environment and other land management schemes. This funding helps farmers to manage the land more sustainably and deliver important outcomes on biodiversity, landscape and access, water quality and climate change. Some £600 million has been made available within England to make agriculture and forestry more competitive and sustainable and to enhance opportunity in rural areas.
9. The Regional Implementation Plan (RIP) sets out the principles, priorities and delivery arrangements for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme for England, 2007-13 (RDPE) in the East Midlands. The first RIP was published in 2008 following a period of stakeholder consultation. The LRP commented on the development of the RIP.
10. On 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009 emda, Natural England and the Forestry Commission published a draft refresh of the RIP. A stakeholder event at emda was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> November to outline the new proposals. The full draft RIP can be found at <http://bit.ly/3V1Epz>.
11. This refresh of the RIP is being conducted in order to take account of the following policy developments.
  - Voluntary modulation funds (including livestock)
  - Broadband/dairy funding (EERP)
  - Programme delivery experience to date, including the establishment of seven contracted LEADER groups
  - CAP health check & subsequent intervention rate changes
  - Economic downturn & subsequent (temporary) state aid changes
  - Climate Change impacts and Action Plan
  - Establishment of National RDPE Network
  - Introduction of Uplands ELS in place of HFA
  - England's Trees Woods and Forests Delivery Plan
12. There are four strands of the RIP which broadly align to the four Axes of the European Rural Development Regulation. These are identified below
  - 1) Conserving and enhancing the environment and countryside
  - 2) Competitiveness, collaboration and diversification
  - 3) Enhancing opportunity and quality of life in rural areas
  - 4) Skills development.
13. A number of proposals have been set out within the draft RIP to take account of new policy developments. These include by Strand;
 

Strand 1 - Conserving and enhancing the environment and countryside

  - No change to the measures except enhancing support for energy crops to include Short Rotation Coppice and Miscanthus.

Strand 2 – Competitiveness, collaboration and diversification

- Reducing measure to improve the economic value of forests from £1.05m to £0.1. The amount re-allocated is proposed to be used as a regional Forestry Micro-enterprise fund of £1m. This programme will provide small capital grants to forestry enterprises to be delivered by emda and the Forestry Commission. The criteria for funding will be developed if the RIP is agreed.
- Increasing fund for infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry from £6m to £8m. Increase to take account of strong demand and the need to support water resource management.
- Introducing a fund of approximately £4.5m in the “basic services” measure to support rural broadband. This is supported by £4m from reallocation from elsewhere in the programme and the additional £403k allocated for broadband improvements as contained within the European Economic Recovery Plan. Emda are also proposing to procure software to identify and analyse connectivity issues.

#### Strand 3 – Enhancing opportunity and quality of life in rural areas

- This strand mainly covers delivery through the LEADER approach and changes do not affect Leicestershire.

#### Strand 4 - Skills development

- Increasing vocational training funding allocation from £1.75m to £2m. This is delivered by Lantra until 2011 (Landskills East Midlands) and includes an additional £402k allocated for restructuring the dairy sector as contained within the European Economic Recovery Plan. The funding will be used to undertake on-farm audits of animal health and welfare and nutrient management.

#### *Broadband*

14. Through Digital Britain the Government has made a Universal Service Commitment to ensure that all households have access to broadband of at least 2Mbps by 2012. To coincide with publication of this the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) published *Mind the Gap: Digital England – a rural perspective*. <http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/CRC104%20Digital%20Inclusion%20Report1.pdf>. This identified the lack of access to digital technology, inadequate broadband and mobile telephone coverage combined with lack of engagement with digital technology all contribute to a complex set of issues for rural communities and lead to disadvantages including:
  - limited access to government services, and to the full range of social benefits available through interactive services, such as cheaper bills and healthcare diagnostics;
  - limited job search opportunities and options such as online training, as well as limiting the social and recreational uses of the internet;
  - increased isolation felt by many older people; and
  - lack of high-speed broadband coverage stifles business innovation, social opportunities and innovative and integrated service delivery.
15. Defra has commissioned research on broadband provision in rural areas. It is believed that this will be available shortly.

16. Broadband provision is a particular concern of businesses and communities within rural Leicestershire. There are a number of points which can be identified in respect of rural Leicestershire.
- Broadband has been identified as a concern through Community Forums including the Belvoir Forum in Melton. There have been a number of issues reported in Stathern
  - Creative Leicestershire have identified that connectivity is the over-riding issue affecting creative business, especially design and media, who are based in rural areas.
  - Rural Estates research commissioned by emda has identified that broadband connectivity is a particular barrier to estates trying to establish office developments and workspace provision. There are a number of examples of estates in Leicestershire which could benefit from this.
  - The Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Assessment has identified the need to support broadband in rural locations
  - Within Mind the Gap the CRC has published national maps showing areas which have broadband connectivity below 2Mbps and no alternative service to BT. Within Leicestershire areas include the Vale of Belvoir, south of Melton Mowbray, Osgathorpe/Whitwick, Desford/Market Bosworth, and north west of Market Harborough. There is a need, however, for more accurate mapping.
  - There is a successful community broadband scheme operating within Leicestershire – South Witham Broadband which covers Cold Overton and Buckminster <http://www.wireless.southwitham.net/>
17. The RIP has identified that the fund for broadband will, “support a number of pilot projects in new generation rural broadband. This will bring significant benefits to local farming and other land-based businesses, as well as the wider local businesses and rural community”. It is expected that funding for broadband will be delivered through the established RDPE application process administered by emda. New delivery arrangements can not be implemented until the RIP has been endorsed by Defra. The new fund will not be available until Spring 2010.
18. The LRP has a significant role in respect of the proposals within the refreshed RIP, including
- Continuing to promote the funding available through the RDPE – including emda, Natural England and Forestry Commission allocations. There has been an increase in the number of successful RDPE applications within Leicestershire. This has been supported by the joint LRP/emda event earlier in the summer which targeted surveyors and land agents.
  - Identify where LRP funding, either through INSPIRE Leicestershire and Vibrant Villages can deliver projects which have not been supported through the RDPE
  - Promote the support available through Landskills East Midlands
  - Promote the funding that may be available through the Forestry Micro-Enterprise Grant
  - Respond to the RIP to ensure that the refreshed programme is best able to support rural economy needs in Leicestershire
  - Promote funding available for pilot broadband schemes which will benefit rural businesses and communities. Evidence from sector organisations, community-led

consultation, Community Forums, and the Rural Estates research will be central to this.

19. The LRP's draft response to the RIP is contained within Appendix 1 of this report. This is supportive of the proposals contained within the draft RIP and makes recommendation for the delivery arrangements for the Forestry Micro-Enterprise Grant and the broadband funding. The response will be submitted on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009. Delivery arrangements will be reported to the Management Board in due course.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the LRP Management Board:

- i) Note this update report on the development of the EMRAF Rural Framework and the RDPE Regional Implementation Plan
- ii) Endorses the LRP response to the RDPE Regional Implementation Plan contained within Appendix A

### **Officers to contact:**

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## APPENDIX 1 – Draft response to the refreshed RDPE Regional Implementation Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the consultation of revised East Midlands Regional Implementation Plan 2007-13 on behalf of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership. We have made comments against each Strand of the RDPE.

### 1) Strand 1 – Conserving and enhancing the environment and countryside

- Although there are no changes between the measures within the strand there is a need to ensure that slightly revised priorities are promoted appropriately – especially in relation to the increased focus on supporting energy crops.
- Introduction of the Uplands Entry Level Scheme does not impact upon Leicestershire

### 2) Strand 2 – Competitiveness, collaboration and diversification

- Comments on this strand have been split between broadband provision, the Forestry Micro-Enterprise Grant and water resource management

#### **Broadband**

- We strongly endorse the proposal by emda to increase the funding available within Measure 321 to ensure a fund of c.£4.5m to support a number of rural broadband pilots. It is agreed that correct approach is to transfer funding from Measure 311 – Diversification into non-agricultural activities, which is likely to underspend.
- Access to adequate broadband has been identified as a key issues within rural Leicestershire. It is important that this funding is allocated in areas where there are identified needs and where sustainable projects which benefit communities and local businesses can be brought forward.
- Careful consideration should be given when identifying areas eligible for this funding should the new allocation be agreed. Currently, the mapping of not-spots for the East Midlands is insufficient. Within the CRC's Mind the Gap report not-spots are identified as those which are served with up to 2Mbps and do not have a competing broadband provider. Although this was a national map it is possible to identify a number of areas within Leicestershire. There is a need, however, for more accurate mapping.
- In addition careful consideration should be given when identifying who is eligible to apply for funding. Currently, through the RPDE only businesses or their representatives can apply. Through this fundin
- The LRP is aware of an independent internet provider who provides connectivity within parts of rural Lincolnshire, Rutland and Melton – South Witham Broadband. This seems to be a very successful model which could be investigated further. More information is available at <http://www.southwitham.net/> and <http://www.adsl.southwitham.net/>. There is a useful book on the practicalities of setting up the service available at <http://www.lulu.com/content/1627811>
- There was useful discussion of digital inclusion within the June 2009 meeting of the Commission for Rural Communities. Full details available at <http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/90604%20Minutes.pdf>. Within this there was mention of the CRC developing a 'how to' guide on community broadband networks.
- It is important that funding to support broadband improvements benefits both businesses and communities. There needs to be careful application of any definition of a rural business. Whilst there are some small business estates in rural areas who could benefit significantly from broadband improvements, there are also a large number of homeworkers and small businesses operating from residences and their contribution to the rural economy should not be ignored.

### *Evidence of broadband need in Leicestershire*

- On close inspection of the CRC's Mind the Gap report the following areas have been identified as having connectivity of up to 2Mbps and only one provider - Vale of Belvoir, south of Melton Mowbray, Osgathorpe/Whitwick, Desford/Market Bosworth, and north west of Market Harborough.
- Creative Leicestershire has identified broadband as the principal issue affecting the location of creative sector business within rural Leicestershire – especially those working within the media and design sub-sector
- The Local Economic Assessment covering Leicester and Leicestershire has identified rural broadband as a key priority.
- The Belvoir Community Forum in Melton has identified broadband as a particular concern. A number of residents have submitted detailed concerns about provision within Stathern.
- The *Supporting Leicestershire's Rural Economy* research, commissioned by the LRP, identified that there are limitations in use of ICT and poor connection to high speed broadband for the land-based, knowledge-based equestrian and outdoor recreation, food and drink, and renewable energy sectors. Whilst some parts of the county are able to access and utilise good quality broadband not all areas of Leicestershire are able to. Areas of Melton Mowbray, Harborough, Charnwood and North West Leicestershire are suffering substantial difficulties in a consistent and good quality access to broadband. The full report is available at <http://www.oakleaves.org.uk/uploads/supporting-leicestershires-rural.pdf>
- Emda's Rural Estates research identified a number of estate owners, including some in Leicestershire, who have difficulties accessing broadband. Estates provide a range of services in support of the rural economy and communities and it is considered that they could provide the necessary critical mass to ensure sustainable broadband pilot projects.

### ***Forestry Micro-Enterprise Grant***

- We also endorse the proposal to establish this new regional grant programme. This will build on the successful Woodland Economy Support Programme which was delivered by the National Forest Company. Both the LRP and National Forest Company are able to provide any advice or support when developing the grant criteria. Finally, we would welcome the opportunity to promote the funding available within Leicestershire.

### **Water Resource Management**

- We support the increase of funding to support water resource management under Measure 125 from £6m to £8m to reflect high demand and the fact that this is a high priority.

### **3) Strand 3 – Enhancing opportunity and quality of life in rural areas**

- Most of the funding within this Strand is delivered through the LEADER approach. Comments have already been made on non-LEADER funding elsewhere in this response.

### **4) Strand 4 (cross-cutting) – Skills development**

- The LRP support the allocation of European Economic Recovery Plan funding through Measure 111. We agree with emda that this support to undertake on-farm audits of animal health and welfare and nutrients should be used as a catalyst to encourage applications under other elements of the RDPE.

**Rural Strategy and Performance Group**  
**7<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

## **SUB-REGIONAL FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR COORDINATOR**

### **Purpose**

1. To update the Management Board on work being undertaken to finalise the funding application for a sub-regional Food and Drink Sector Coordinator and seek advice on the delivery and management arrangements for the post. The Management Board are also requested to comment on the specification of the Food and Drink Co-ordinator as included in Appendix A

### **Background**

2. It is proposed that a Food and Drink Sector Coordinator will be appointed for three years to develop and implement a clear strategic framework for the food and drink sector across the sub-region.
3. The project is well placed with regards to addressing key elements of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). Within the RES, the food and drink sector is identified as being one of the four priority sectors that is likely to make the greatest contribution to the East Midlands' economy over the lifetime of the strategy.
4. The principle of a Food and Drink Sector Coordinator has previously been endorsed by the LRP Management Board and the sub-regional Coordination Group. Indicative funds have been ring-fenced within the sub-regional investment profile for 2009–2012.
5. On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009, the Rural Strategy and Performance Group considered and approved the proposed project outline for the Food and Drink Sector Coordinator role. Following this meeting, the Business and Enterprise and the Economy and Skills S & P groups, and the Food Steering Group, were consulted about the proposed project outline. The feedback received was considered by the Rural Strategy and Performance Group on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

### **Scope of the role Food and Drink Sector Coordinator**

6. A draft description and specification for the role of Food and Drink Sector Coordinator is detailed in Appendix A. The draft description has been updated since the Rural Strategy and Performance Group meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November in light of feedback received.
7. It has been recognised that the workload associated with the Coordinator role will need to be prioritised. Prioritisation will be a key part of the strategy development process (which will incorporate an action plan). The Rural Strategy and Performance Group have agreed that the precise tasks allocated to the Coordinator in the delivery phase will be subject to negotiation after the development of the strategy. One of the key elements of the development of the strategy will be the allocation of tasks and activities to various partners – given it is clear that the Coordinator will not be able to directly deliver all of the activities that are listed on the draft description of the Coordinator role.

### **Project Management**

8. It was originally anticipated that the Food and Drink Sector Coordinator would be appointed as a consultant and that overall management of the project would be undertaken by Leicestershire County Council's Rural Team under the auspices and review of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (in its role as the Rural Strategy and Performance Group).
9. Senior officers within the Co-ordination Group subsequently asserted that the Food and Drink Coordinator should be based within the Sub-Regional Support Unit and that the appointment should be an employee rather than a consultant.
10. At the Rural Strategy and Performance meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009 the Group did not agree that the Food and Drink Sector Coordinator should be based within the Sub-Regional Support Unit and considered that a consultancy approach would be more suitable than an employee.
11. It was agreed by the Group that in the first instance the application should be made for three full years. There followed a debate about whether the strategy development phase and the delivery phase should be offered as separate contracts. There was concern that there could be a recruitment/contract freeze following the general election in May 2010. This would potentially mean that there would be no resources available for delivery if this phase was offered as a separate contract. The consensus was that strategy development and delivery should be offered as one contract. The preference was to keep the strategy development close to six months in duration. It was considered that strategy development and delivery would require different types of skills, and that a consultancy approach would be more likely to offer the benefit of a wider skills set.
12. Advice is being sought from HMRC regarding the tax implications of contracting a consultant over a three year period. If the consultancy arrangement is considered by HMRC to be equivalent to the employment status of an employee, it is possible that there could also be employment rights. It is apparent that the contract would need to be carefully worded to avoid potential tax implications and employment rights. If a consultancy employs a number of people (or is contracted to provide a substitute as required) on a project, it appears that there is a reduced likelihood of employment rights or tax implications that would impact upon the contractee.
13. The views of the Rural Strategy and Performance Group were communicated verbally at the Co-ordination Group on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009. It was determined that a paper regarding the delivery and management arrangements for the Food and Drink Sector Coordinator would be forwarded to the Coordination Group for their meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

### **Timescales**

14. The aim is to complete all aspects of the funding application as soon as possible. It is proposed that the application is submitted immediately following agreement with the Co-ordination Group on the delivery and management arrangements. It is anticipated that the Coordinator role will be able to be advertised in February (subject to funding being approved and clarification of the management and hosting arrangements).

**Recommendation**

The Management Board is requested to:

- Advise on the delivery management arrangements for the role of Food and Drink Sector Coordinator.
- Comment on the draft description and specification for the role of the Food and Drink Sector Co-ordinator.

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## **APPENDIX A – 2<sup>nd</sup> DRAFT description/specification for the role of Food and Drink Sector Coordinator**

### **1. DRAFT Description**

#### **Develop a food and drink strategy and action plan**

- Produce a sub-regional food and drink strategy that will enable the sector to develop in an effective and sustainable manner. The strategy will need to be coherent with national and regional food and drink strategies, as well as the sub-region's economic strategy and sustainable community strategies.
- Ensure that the strategy addresses the current skills gap, identifies the skills and training needs, as well as opportunities to develop career routes for young people and graduates in both the city and county. Employers, schools, colleges and universities will need to be fully engaged in this process.
- Ensure that food groups, district councils, major stakeholders, learning institutions, businesses and producer groups, ethnic groups, tourism businesses and other relevant sectors are involved in the formulation of the strategy and are engaged in its outcomes.
- Take account of all the issues that are relevant to the future success of the food and drink sector when developing the strategy. This will include consideration of supply chains and distribution networks, sales infrastructure, tourism and marketing opportunities, export markets, training and education, technology and investment, healthy eating, regulatory matters, food security, environmental sustainability, IT and communications, research needs etc.
- Identify best practice elsewhere in the region and the country and ensure that this is captured in the strategy and disseminated. Examples may also be outside the food and drink sector e.g. National Forest Woodland Economy Support Programme.
- Ensure the strategy has an action or delivery plan with timescales, resources needed, responsibilities assigned, timescales and outcomes all included in the plan.
- Prioritise delivery of the Action Plan.

#### **Support the development of food and drink networks**

- Liaise with food groups already existing in the county and city and where appropriate support the establishment of new groups and networks.
- Identify opportunities for networking and collaboration activity across producers/restaurateurs/retailers/ further education colleges/hospitality companies.
- Promote the establishment of specialist networks e.g. bakery, butchery etc, which could be hosted by a relevant college, institution or company.
- Ensure as wide a range of businesses are engaged in these networks and activities e.g. farmers, retailers, ethnic, large and small manufacturers as well as their representative groups e.g. NFU, CLA, FSB, Chamber of Commerce. Such networks could be real and/or virtual (online).

### **Support skills and training activities**

- Work to increase the number of food and drink manufacture employers delivering apprenticeships in food and drink, specifically focusing on 16-18 year olds.
- Ensure the active engagement of the FE colleges in the delivery of the Action Plan and the development of skills and training provision in the city and county.
- Work to engage the three universities in both the skills and training, and the research and development agendas.

### **Tourism development and promotion**

- Integrate local food within mainstream tourism and hospitality marketing and events.
- Ensure that the sub-region's rich heritage in ethnic foods and rural foods is fully exploited.
- Market and promote the sub-region's food and drink, including development of the potential for sub-regional branding and further registered food names.

### **Advance business support and infrastructure development**

- Identify funding streams to support the sector by engaging with Business Link.
- Refer businesses to Business Link to assist access to business development and training opportunities.
- Identify and promote local development opportunities.
- Assist food and drink businesses to access export markets through UKTI.
- Capitalise on opportunities to transfer knowledge and research to food and drink businesses.
- Develop local distribution and supply chains across the City and County (including public procurement) and support the Campaign to Protect Rural England's (CPRE) food mapping project.

### **Promote healthy eating/food education**

- Promote healthy food choices through education initiatives.
- Promote the procurement of healthier foods.

### **General support/responsibilities**

- Ensure that food activities across the county and city are coordinated.
- Work with the LRP communications officer/group and wider partners to promote the project through various channels, including the organisation of events and the marketing associated with the project.
- To produce output monitoring/recording documentation as required.

- To achieve targets as agreed by the Rural Strategy and Performance Group.
- Act as the ambassador for the county and city to relevant bodies related to food and drink in the region and nationally.
- Build, develop and maintains effective working relationships with industry, industry representatives and wider stakeholder and partners.
- Report at least annually and where appropriate more regularly on the progress of these activities.

## **2. DRAFT Specification**

### **Education**

- Educated to degree level (or equivalent) in a relevant subject

### **Key Attitudes and Behaviours**

- Credibility and proven ability to influence
- Food sector professional
- Has a passion for food and drink and demonstrates positive role model behaviour
- Has a focused proactive approach and ability to champion the food and drink sector
- Committed and self motivated

### **Knowledge**

- Strategy development
- Food supply chain and markets
- Product marketing
- Food processing and manufacturing
- Tourism and marketing
- Food technology
- Product development
- Logistics
- Education sector and skills development
- Business strategy
- External funding

### **Experience in**

- Strategic planning, project management, organising events, marketing
- Experience of accounts, budgeting, financial control
- Preparation of high quality reports and presentations
- Researching and reviewing specific issues and analysing information and data to inform delivery
- Developing, implementing, managing and evaluating projects
- Collaborative and partnership working with others to ensure the achievement of key objectives

### **Competencies**

- High level negotiating, influencing and listening skills
- Good organisational skills

- Ability to analyse complex situations and to develop new approaches
- Well developed presentation, verbal and written communication skills
- Able to advise on all aspects of food activity
- Well developed IT skills and familiarity with Microsoft Office
- Able to work under pressure and to meet deadlines/targets, including planning projects effectively and leading them to implementation
- Ability to work independently and within delivery framework
- Strategic thinking and leadership
- Relationship development
- Multiple stakeholder communication

**Other requirements**

- Willingness to undertake some work out of hours
- The ability to travel to locations across Leicester and Leicestershire and to attend regional/national meetings

**LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT BOARD****7<sup>th</sup> December 2009****COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE – AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION DELEGATION AND MANGAGEMENT BOARD PAPERS****Purpose of Report**

1. To provide feedback to the Management Board on the Agriculture and Rural Development Commission delegation visit to Leicestershire in October and seek approval for an additional visit.
2. To request that the partner pages within the Oakleaves website are used for the publication of Management Board papers

**Agriculture and Rural Development Commission delegation to Leicestershire**

3. The inward delegation visit follows a Leicestershire Rural Partnership delegation visit to Brussels in September 2007. The purpose of this was to;
  - raise awareness among key individuals and EU institutions of the work and priorities of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership, and the resourcing needs of rural Leicestershire
  - update existing knowledge of EU policy and decision making, and how this will impact upon agriculture and the wider rural economy within Leicestershire
4. The delegation was attended by
  - Mrs Lesley Pendleton – Chairman, Leicestershire Rural Partnership
  - Martin Traynor – LRP and Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce
  - Clive Keble – LRP and National Forest Company
  - Nicole Rickard – Leicestershire County Council
5. The delegation visit helped to inform a bid for LEADER funding as part of the Rural Development Programme to support development of the National Forest. This application, administered through the East Midlands Development Agency, was unsuccessful.
6. As part of this delegation visit Neil Parish, former MEP and Chairman of the European Parliament's Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, proposed that an inward delegation be hosted to demonstrate further the work of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership and identify future opportunities to influence EC agricultural and rural development policy.

***European Commission delegation visit to Leicestershire – 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> October***

7. The purpose of the inward delegation was to
  - Discuss rural development opportunities and challenges that are emerging in rural Leicestershire and how these relate to EU policy developments, in light of the CAP Health Check.
  - Highlight how the work of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) and regional partners is contributing to delivery of European Rural Development policy on the ground.
  - Raise awareness among key individuals and EU institutions of the work and priorities of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership.

8. The European partners who attended the delegation were
  - Lene Naesager – Deputy Head of Cabinet, Agriculture and Rural Development Commission. Representative of Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel
  - Emma McClarkin MEP (East Midlands) (day one only)
9. In addition we were expecting delegates from the Commission's officer unit – DG AGRI – Adelina Dos Reis and Jean-Bernard Benhaiem. Unfortunately they were unable to attend.
10. The event was jointly hosted by the Chairman of Leicestershire County Council, Mr Roger Wilson, and the Chairman of Leicestershire Rural Partnership, Mrs Lesley Pendleton. A wide range of partners attended and contributed to the delegation visit including representatives from emda, GOEM, Country Land and Business Association, National Farmers Union, Natural England, National Forest Company, Rural Community Council (Leicestershire and Rutland), and the Chamber of Commerce.
11. Over the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009 a full programme of site visits and meetings was held within North West Leicestershire and Melton districts. Site visits over the two days included the Diseworth Heritage Centre, Manor Organic Farm, the National Forest Youth Hostel, Vale View Equestrian Centre, Belvoir Brewery and Walton Thorns Rural Centre and Self-Catering Accommodation. There were also presentations on the Big Switch Off campaign and the Ride Welland project.
12. The event included a formal dinner, hosted at Castle House, which was attended by key partners and the Leader of Leicestershire County Council, Mr David Parsons.

*Conclusion of the delegation visit*

13. The delegation visit concluded with a presentation from Lene Naesager. She identified that;
  - The current policy framework is due to expire in 2013 and efforts are being undertaken to develop the successor programme. As part of this it is proposed that rural development initiatives will be strengthened. There is greater public acceptance of rural development over direct payments to farmers. Direct payments will remain as a Pillar of the RDP and will not be built into structural funds (e.g. ESF, ERDF). Further details of future simplification will be made available in March
  - Lisbon Treaty viewed as of significant importance to speed up delivery process by introducing "co-decision procedure" between the European Parliament and Commission.
  - Commitment through the Health Check process to consider the criteria for direct payments. Look to ensure consistency across member states.
  - Member States have been invited to submit proposals on Intermediate Less Favoured Areas by January 2010. Any revision of LFA status will not affect Leicestershire
  - CAP Health Check considered successful there is still need for intervention around innovation, restructuring of the dairy sector, and broadband provision.
  - Commission and DG AGRI consider that the UK programme is well advanced based on Defra implementing voluntary modulation to support increased levels of funding available through the RDP
  - Continued priority to support more efficient water management and renewable energy
  - Post-2013 there will be greater promotion of agricultural products with a key focus on quality – to include PGI status, origin labelling (fruit, veg, dairy)

- Falling milk prices have resulted in expressed from some member states. Provision has been made to allow member states to award one-off payment of €15k in state aid. Additional provision is being made through the European Economic Recovery Plan to support restructuring of the dairy sector (see Paper 5). A High Level Expert Group on milk will have been established to discuss medium and long-term arrangements for the dairy sector given the expiry of milk quotas on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. Concern was expressed that there are significant problems with the milk supply chain, the sector has lost a number of dairy farmers, and the need to avoid propping up other member states.
- It is expected that Mariann Fischer Boel will step down as Commissioner

#### *Next steps*

14. It is considered that the LRP can lead further work to influence EC agricultural and rural development policy. This will include
- Hosting a mini-delegation to Leicestershire attended by DG AGRI and Defra colleagues in February 2010. This will be a lower profile event over the course of one day which will focus on influencing the future modifications of the Rural Development Programme. Invitees will include representatives of LRP regional partner organisations, Management Board members, and other East Midlands local authorities. The event will be timetabled to ensure maximum opportunity to influence the process
  - Seek alliances with regions in other Member States who share similar priorities. The LRP has already established initial contact with East Midlands' MEPs. Their involvement will be central to influencing future policy.
15. Alongside this there is a need to continue to promote existing support which is available through the Rural Development Programme for England, 2007-13. This includes
- Funding to support socio-economic schemes delivered by emda
  - Environmental stewardship schemes delivered by Natural England
  - Land-based business support available through Landskills East Midlands, and delivered by Lantra
16. In addition, through the European Economic Recovery Plan funding has been allocated to each RDA to support broadband initiatives in rural areas and to help restructure the dairy sector. This will be delivered through the Rural Development Programme for England and will require a revision of the Regional Implementation Plan (RIP). Regional partners launched a consultation draft of the RIP on 16<sup>th</sup> November. More details are contained within Paper C.

#### **Publication of Rural Strategy and Performance Group and Management Board papers**

17. In 2008 the LRP's Oakleaves website was substantially redesigned. This was undertaken in order to
- Improve the appearance and ensure better navigation between different areas within the site
  - Ensure better promotion of the work of the LRP including supported projects
  - Provide additional features including an events calendar and a private area for Members of the LRP
  - To make management of the site easier and allow more officers to manage content
  - Support the linking of Oakleaves to other community websites (e.g. Leicestershire Villages)
  - Support better site monitoring to identify how Oakleaves is used externally

18. Currently there are 171 registered users of Oakleaves and since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 there have been 15,000 page views. Currently the events page is the most popular page.
19. As part of this a Partner page was developed for use by the Rural Strategy and Performance Group and the Management Board. This is currently underused and it is proposed that this page is used for the publication of papers for the meetings of both these groups, and to undertake consultation activities (e.g. EMRAF Rural Framework etc.).
20. The partner site within Oakleaves is a member only page and so is not publicly accessible. Work has been undertaken to pre-register all Strategy and Performance Group and Management Board members to ensure that they have access to these pages. Members will be able to access the site once they have logged on to Oakleaves
21. Currently c.30 sets of papers for the Management Board are printed and distributed on a quarterly basis. This is a considerable amount of paper and that some members would prefer to access paperwork online and print only the reports which they wish to. We will still be offering to print and distribute papers for those Members who consider that they would still prefer this.
22. Members of the Rural Strategy and Performance Group and the Management Board who opt for this will be e-mailed at least a week in advance of meetings informing them that papers are ready to be downloaded.

### **Recommendations**

The Management Board are requested to:

- a) Note this feedback report on the EC Agriculture and Rural Development Commission delegation visit to Leicestershire
- b) Approve the hosting of an additional visit to Leicestershire to include representatives from DG AGRI, Defra, LRP Management Board partners, and East Midlands local authorities
- c) Approve the use of the Oakleaves partner site to publish Rural Strategy and Performance Group and Management Board papers in advance of meetings, and
- d) Individual members of the Management Board to identify if they wish to only to receive papers online for future meetings.

### **Officer to contact:**

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# LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT BOARD

7<sup>th</sup> December 2009

## ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE RURAL STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE GROUP

### Purpose of Report

1. The following items have been referred up to the LRP Management Board from the LRP Strategy and Performance Group, following their meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The minutes of this meeting, and an earlier meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October are attached as **Appendix A**.

### Contents of the Report

2. Most of the items referred have been discussed under the main agenda however the following items for information are listed below:

- A. Heart of the Forest Action Plan
- B. Local Economic Assessment and Economic Strategy
- C. LRP Quarterly Monitoring Report Q2 – 2009-10

### A. Heart of the Forest Action Plan

#### Purpose

3. To update the Management Board on publication of the Heart of the Forest's Vision and Action Plan (within the National Forest)

#### Background

4. The Heart of the Forest is located centrally within the National Forest, between Swadlincote, Ashby and Measham, and covers an area of 100,000 acres. Supported through the former Leicester Shire Economic Partnership, the Heart of the Forest Foundation commissioned consultants to undertake research to prepare a Vision and Action Plan to unlock the economic potential of the Heart of the Forest.

#### Heart of the Forest Vision Action Plan

5. The Heart of the Forest has established a Vision to 2026 which identifies that

*The Heart of the National Forest in 2026 is an exciting new forest landscape. It supports a successful forest economy and is a major tourist and leisure destination. The former industrial landscape has been successfully restored to create a highly attractive, well managed environment, providing an employment base for local people. The Heart of the National Forest celebrates its heritage, supports strong communities, and is adapted to climate change. It has a strong sense of place and identity which is inspiring for its residents and visitors.*

6. Delivery of the Vision is divided into themes. These include
  - Policy Matters – ensure the potential of the Heart is recognised in key policy documents
  - Partnership Matters – continue to work in partnership
  - Prosperity Matters – unlock the new economic potential of a diversified Forest economy. Sub themes include, tourism, woodland and environmental economy, leisure, and stronger communities

- Place Matters – develop a strategic green infrastructure
7. The strategic themes are supported by a total of 16 outcomes. These cover job creation (tourism, recreation, woodland economy), additional visitors, additional bed spaces in self-catering and serviced accommodation, increase in woodland coverage, new business start-ups, and revitalisation of local town centres.
  8. 3 specific projects have been identified through the action plan process and business plans have been developed. The projects include
    - Developing a Woodland and Countryside Community Interest Company
    - Self Catering development options for three different sites for forest lodges, tepees and barge boat accommodation
    - A Mobile Explorer project to improve orientation and interest
  9. The National Forest Company will be working with the Heart of the Forest Foundation to undertake the following activities over the next 18 months
    - The continuation on site development and (hopefully) further land acquisitions in the Heart of the Forest area.
    - Getting landowners together to develop proposals for collaboration on land management.
    - Considering possible social enterprise models related to land management, training and the production/sale of woodland products.
    - Liaison with the HNFF on inputs to the emerging Local Development Frameworks in North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire to secure appropriate recognition for the expanded Heart of the Forest but also to ensure consistency with input from the NFC on the wider Forest in terms of growth point and planning matters.
    - An examination of how connections within and links to the Heart of the Forest can be improved to increase the legibility and understanding of the area for visitors and local people, including signage, interpretation and physical links such as trails.
  10. Progress to deliver the Action Plan will be considered by a range of partners at a review meeting in the New year

### **Role of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership**

11. Working with the National Forest Company the LRP has a role to support the initiatives proposed within the Action Plan. Activities that the LRP can undertake include
  - Ensuring that there is an effective link with community-led planning and engagement activities supported by the LEP within the Heart of the Forest – including parish planning and Community Forums.
  - Work to ensure that the NFC's Making Woods Work programme supports the objectives contained within the Action Plan
  - Working with the Foundation to promote available LRP grant funding – especially through INSPIRE and Vibrant Villages, can promote
  - Ensure that support available through the Rural Development Programme for England is promoted within the Heart of Forest area, working with the National Forest Company
  - Consider amendments to the Rural SRIP and project issues in respect of the Conkers Aerial Walkway (see Paper 7).

### **Recommendation**

12. The Management Board are requested to:

- a) Note the publication of the Heart of the Forest Vision and Action Plan
- b) Comments on how the LRP can further support the delivery of the priority actions

**Officers to contact:**

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## **B. Local Economic Assessment and Economic Strategy**

### **Purpose**

13. To update the Management Board on the development of the Local Economic Assessment for Leicester and Leicestershire

### **Background**

14. The Economic Assessment will provide a robust evidence base and consider the implications of this evidence and propose strategic priorities on the basis of this evidence. These priorities will inform future Sub-Regional Strategies, Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and the Multi Area Agreement (MAA). The assessment will also support and inform the development of a regional economic assessment and subsequently the Single Regional Strategy.

15. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council have agreed that there will be a single sub-regional economic assessment but the EA will reflect the different characteristics and needs of places within the sub-region. It will provide a key evidence base which will inform the future priorities, to be led by the Strategy and Performance Groups, in delivering the MAA. It will also inform the development of the Sub-Regional Economic Strategy.

16. The chapter outlines and leads for the Economic Assessment are detailed below

- Business and Enterprise (LCC Research and Information)
- Employment and Skills (LCC Research and Information)
- Demographic Trends (LCC Research and Information)
- Housing, Planning and Infrastructure (HPIG)
- Economic Inclusion and Worklessness (LCC Research and Information)
- Transport (Consultants through Transport Group)
- Environment (ENABLE)
- District profiles (Better Places Team with district councils)

### **Rural development work**

17. At its last meeting the Management Board agreed that rural should be embedded within the document for data analysis purposes. It has been agreed that there will be a separate rural chapter which will highlight key issues affecting the rural economy.

18. A special meeting of the Rural Strategy and Performance Group was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> October to consider the Economic Assessment in detail. Work is currently being undertaken to ensure that comments made will be incorporated within the document. Working with transport colleagues within the County Council substantial work has been undertaken to ensure that rural transport issues, especially related to access to work and training are incorporated.

19. There will be formal 8-week consultation on the Economic Assessment and Economic Strategy from 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010. It is proposed that an LRP Forum event be hosted during this

time to ensure that there is wider input into the development and to ensure that all rural economy perspectives are represented.

### **Recommendation:**

20. It is recommended that the Management Board

- a. Notes the update on the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Economic Assessment

### **Contact Officers:**

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Rural Partnerships Manager

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0116 305 6179

## **C. LRP Quarterly Monitoring Report Q1 (April 2009 –July 2009)**

### **Purpose**

21. To update the Management Board on progress of projects supported by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership

### **Project Monitoring**

22. The Project Monitoring Returns for Quarter 2 (minus the Community Transport project) are attached as **Appendix B**. The following items are highlighted;

Positives:

- a. Community Capacity Building – Joint meetings with VAL and Stronger Communities workers are giving a greater knowledge of Community Development work in the districts to avoid overlaps.
- b. Rural Housing Enabler – The number of HNS carried out is now well ahead of schedule, and the number of suitable exception sites with a willing vendor is on track.
- c. Vibrant Villages – Several larger community spaces projects have been successfully completed.
- d. Community ICT – Work is being done with the Leicestershire Waste Partnership to build a 'FreeUse' website. This website will enable people to give away any unwanted items rather than discarding them, thus reducing waste and land fill. This site will be linked in tightly with [leicestershirevillages.com](http://leicestershirevillages.com)
- e. Two community events have been held.

Negatives:

- a. Community Capacity Building – Insufficient capacity to undertake as much facilitation as required in conjunction with participatory budgeting at Community Forums because this had not been anticipated at time of putting workplan together.
- b. Rural Housing Enabler – In order that the 'pre development' work carried out by the LRRHE results in affordable homes being built, further development work and bids for HCA grant is reliant on schemes being taken forward by the partner RSLs. This quarter has again seen the recession impacting on the delivery capabilities of partner RSLs.
- c. Vibrant Villages – Enquiries from retailers have slowed and requests for retail advice have decreased (although funds committed are in line with forecast progress).

- d. Community ICT – Despite reduced funding this year, good progress is being made in terms of the KPI's. However reduced marketing activity has resulted in a slower growth in the number of site visits. A marketing strategy is being worked on that will seek to enable work to be done more smartly to allow lost ground to be made up.
- e. The Knowledge Transfer protocol between De Montfort University and the LRCC has only just been signed. Thus an appointment can only now be considered of an LRCC based officer to help deliver Climate Friendly Community work.

### **Recommendation**

23. It is recommended that the Management Board:

- a. Notes the Second Quarter report, and
- b. Considers the document attached to this report (**Appendix B**) for details concerning specific projects.

### **Contact Officer:**

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Rural Policy Officer

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## APPENDIX A

# Rural Strategy and Performance Group

9:00 – 11:00 Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Board Room, Leicester Shire Promotions Limited  
7-9 Every Street, Town Hall Square, Leicester, LE1 6AG

## MINUTES

Item		Action
1	<p><b>Chairman's Introduction</b> Jeremy Prescott welcomed everyone to the meeting</p>	
	<p><b>Introductions and apologies</b></p> <p><b>Apologies</b> Gill Smitherman (L&amp;L Support Unit) Caroline Mackay (Leicestershire County Council) Martin Peters (Leicester Shire Promotions)</p> <p><b>Attendees</b> Jeremy Prescott (RCC) - Chair Matthew Kempson (Leicestershire County Council) Nicole Rickard (Leicestershire County Council) Ray Smith (Leicestershire County Council) Bob Scott (Leicestershire Constabulary) Sue Grogan (LLCLP) Lynn Aisbett (Melton Borough Council) Richard Mugglestone (Midlands Rural Housing) Philip Bailey (Leicestershire County Council) Kevan Liles (Voluntary Action Leicestershire) Andrew Granger (Andrew Granger and Co) Charlene Arnold (East Midlands Business) Richard Tulloch (emda) Peter Williams (Leicestershire County Council)</p>	
2	<p><b>Minutes and Matters Arising of last meeting</b> Minutes of the meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 were agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JP commented that it would be preferable to have individual meeting papers circulated as soon as they are finished to enable papers to be read as far in advance of meetings as possible.</li> <li>• PB had submitted the response to emda's consultation on the Regional Evidence Base.</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b>Heart of the Forest Action Plan (National Forest)</b> MK summarised the content of the Action Plan. There were four key themes to the delivery of the vision for the Heat of the National Forest.</p>	

	<p>These were Policy Matters, Partnership Matters, Prosperity Matters and Place Matters. Three specific projects had been identified through the action plan and business plan process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a Woodland and Countryside Community Interest Community.</li> <li>• Self catering development options for three different sites for forest lodges, tepees and barge boat accommodation.</li> <li>• A mobile explorer project to improve orientation and interest.</li> </ul> <p>PW provided a brief summary of the nature of these projects and declared an interest given that his membership of the board of the Heart of the National Forest Foundation. The Community Interest Company related to the prospect of a 1,000 acre 'Forest Park' being made available for all to use free of charge – which would be similar to the donation of Swithland Wood by the Rotary Club of Leicester. The mobile explorer project would provide a transport link between the Forest Park and Conkers.</p> <p>SG asked about the number of jobs associated with the proposals in the Action Plan. The Action Plan stated that project delivery would lead to 300 additional jobs.</p> <p>AG suggested that there should be reference within the Action Plan to the potential economic benefits of carbon capture through tree planting activities in the Heart of the National Forest – especially in light of the government's support for the Forestry Commission's recent recommendation to increase tree planting in the UK [to cover 4% more of the UK].</p> <p>BS commented that with the proposed increase in the amount of visitor accommodation and car parking, the Foundation should take advice from the Police's architectural liaison officer.</p> <p>Other comments were to link the food and drink offer to the promotion of the National Forest, and to exploit every opportunity to enhance public awareness of the Forest. It was observed that there had been significant coverage of the National Memorial Forest over recent months.</p>	
4	<p><b>EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commission – next steps</b></p> <p>MK thanked everyone for their part in helping to make the visit by the EC delegation a success. MK reported the main issues that were raised when Emma McClarkin MEP and Lene Naesager visited.</p> <p>MK hoped that there would be an opportunity to work to with MEPs and officers to influence modifications to the RDPE programme post 2013. MK proposed that EC officers are hosted on a one day visit at the end of February.</p>	

	<p>Support was expressed for the proposed visit. AG, although sceptical about the degree to which the future direction of the CAP and RDPE funding could be influenced, thought that the best approach would be to start trying to influence as early as possible. KL commented that from his experience the best way of influencing European policy was to work on a pan-European basis. This usually involved working with at least two other countries. This could be arranged through the East Midlands European Office. MK commented that there may be the potential to work with other counties in the EU that take a similar approach to voluntary modulation as the UK.</p> <p>There followed a discussion about how to engage with the agricultural sector to obtain an informed view of their priorities and to gain an understanding of their views of the CAP. It was agreed that a presentation regarding the views of the agricultural sector would be useful. The NFU and CLA would be invited to provide a presentation. It would be useful to involve Rebecca Frost, the head of the RDPE Network.</p> <p>Peter Williams commented that he was aware of a website that focused upon projects in the North Sea and North West Europe zones. [see <a href="http://www.northsearegion.eu/">http://www.northsearegion.eu/</a> and <a href="http://www.nweurope.eu/">http://www.nweurope.eu/</a>]</p>	<p><b>MK</b></p> <p><b>MK</b></p>
5	<p><b>Local Economic Assessment – update</b></p> <p>MK had not had time to prepare a paper before the meeting. However, a verbal update was provided. The forum scheduled for after the meeting had been cancelled. The formal consultation upon the Economic Assessment in the New Year would give the opportunity to comment on the findings.</p> <p>MK stated that the transport section now incorporated information from the STAR Report.</p>	
6	<p><b>Regional Rural Policy Development (EMRAF, RIP)</b></p> <p><b>EMRAF</b></p> <p>EMRAF was consulting on the East Midlands Framework document which would be taking the place of the East Midlands Rural Action Plan. There was a two week consultation with partners on the new Framework. The Framework concentrated on the broad objectives for the EMRAF up to 2013. There were no specific actions within the Framework. The plan was for the actions to be developed at a later stage by the EMRAF sub-groups.</p> <p>Initial comments on the Framework would be e-mailed to LRP members by Friday 27 November for comment, prior to submission of the comments by the EMRAF deadline of Friday 4 December.</p> <p><b>RIP</b></p> <p>RT provided an update on the transfer of money within the RDPE programme. The proposal was for £402k to be made available for the</p>	

	<p>dairy sector and £403k for better services i.e. broadband infrastructure. MK commented that within the Belvoir area [the northern area of Melton district] the need for improved broadband capacity had been expressed at the local community forum. RT explained that emda was seeking to invest approximately £4.5m [including the £403k from RDPE] in broadband demonstration projects. It was expected that the proposed investment plans would be signed off at the RIP meeting on Friday 27 December. RT acknowledged that £4.5m would not stretch very far in a regional context. It was anticipated that the broadband funding would be allocated through an Invitation to Apply for Grant Funding (IAGF).</p> <p>DEFRA was shortly to publish research on rural broadband provision across the country. RT stated that as part of the RDPE broadband funding, emda planned to test broadband speeds across the East Midlands through a network of volunteers who would use software to log broadband speed at different times of the week.</p> <p>AG commented with regards to the RDPE funding to be made available of the dairy sector it was very difficult to see how additional funding support would solve the primary issue of concern to dairy farmers, this being the price offered for milk by the supermarkets. In AG's experience, broadband was of importance with regards to the businesses taking the decision to locate their offices in the countryside. However, AG had found that when offices were more than approximately 5 miles from a reasonably sized centre they became more difficult to let, and especially re-let.</p>	
7	<p><b>Food and Drink Coordinator – draft Prioritisation</b></p> <p>PB summarised the feedback that had been provided via the Business and Enterprise and the Economy and Skills S&amp;P groups, as well as by other partner organisations.</p> <p>A key element of the feedback was the requirement to demonstrate the need and demand for a Coordinator through reference to the needs of food and drink businesses in the sub-region. It was also considered necessary to include detailed outcomes and outputs in return for the funding. One example of a possible output was emda's E4a output concerning the number of businesses engaged in new collaborations with the UK knowledge base. The LSC were of the view that the Coordinator should have a real focus on helping to increase the number of food and drink manufactures in food and drink delivering apprenticeships that specifically focus on 16-18 year olds. It was also noted that it was important to take account of how the project would fit with the BSSP (Business Support Simplification Programme), and that research and detailed understanding of the food and drink sector at a sub-regional level was somewhat limited.</p> <p>PB reported that it was likely that there would be significant changes to the delivery arrangements that had initially been proposed for the post. Senior officers within the Co-ordination Group considered that the Food and Drink Sector Coordinator should be based within the Sub-Regional Support Unit, and that the appointment should be an employee rather</p>	

than a consultant.

With regards to the length of the contract, it was agreed by the Rural Group that in the first instance the application should be made for three full years. There was debate about whether the strategy development phase and the delivery phase should be offered as separate contracts. There was concern that there could be a recruitment/contract freeze following the general election in May 2010. This would potentially mean that there would be no resources available for delivery if this phase was offered as a separate contract. The consensus was that strategy development and delivery should be offered as one contract. The preference was to keep the strategy development close to six months in duration. It was recognised that strategy development and delivery would require different types of skills, but that a consultancy approach would be more likely to offer the benefit of a wider skills set.

There was a possibility that a consultant contracted for a three year period could be considered to be a 'de facto' employee by HMRC and therefore bring about tax implications. The de facto issue might also result in employment rights. Advice would be sought. AG considered that a consultancy that employed a number of people on the project would be unlikely to generate individual employment rights or tax implications for the employer.

The prioritisation of the activities of the Coordinator was discussed. At the previous meeting, it was considered important to prioritise the activities of the Coordinator to provide a more limited menu of activities in order to increase their impact. It was agreed that the precise tasks allocated to the Coordinator in the delivery phase would be subject to negotiation after the development of the Strategy (which would incorporate an Action Plan). One of the key elements of the strategy would be the allocation of tasks and activities to various partners as it was clear that the Coordinator would not be able to directly deliver all of the activities listed on the draft description of the Coordinator role.

There was discussion of the prospect of the Coordinator role being based at the Sub-Regional Support Unit. The Group did not agree that the Food and Drink Sector Coordinator should be based within the Support Unit. KL commented that such an arrangement was a disincentive to sub-groups and their members to spend time developing projects if the projects were then subsumed into the Support Unit. There was some confusion regarding the function of the Support Unit. It was understood that the Support Unit had been established to be commissioning body, and it had not been made apparent that it would be acting as a delivery body. There was also general concern that it appeared that decisions were being undertaken outside of the sub-regional governance arrangements.

PB was asked about the timescales relating to the completion of the application and the recruitment process. PB stated that his target would be to complete the application by Friday 4 December. It was anticipated that the role would be able to be advertised by February [subject to funding being approved and clarification of the management and hosting arrangements].

8	<p><b>Rural Economic Development – Update</b></p> <p>There was discussion of a Conkers Aerial Walkway project. The proposed walkway would provide a link to classroom and viewing nodes. It had been anticipated that a large contribution would be received from The Michael Bishop Foundation. However, due to the current recession the fall in the income of the Foundation meant they were unable to support the Aerial Walkway for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the Heart of the Forest Foundation was seeking £550k from the Sub Regional Investment Plan towards the total £2.2m programme (reliant on contributions from a number of organisations). The Rural Group was being asked if it would support the £550k from sub-regional funds. KL was concerned that a lot of the funding required was subject to approval and there was considerable risk that the project would not come to fruition. As such, the perception of the Group may be diminished if the project failed. JP enquired whether it would possible to find out if expenditure on the project could be reduced or re-profiled. Despite the concerns about the funding situation, the Group decided that it should back funding of the aerial walkway project.</p> <p><b>Project Updates</b></p> <p>MK provided an update on the INSPIRE programme. Funding had been approved by emda with a variety of conditions attached. Work was being undertaken to finalise the delivery arrangements for the programme.</p> <p>CA mentioned that there was a meeting of Business Link advisers on 21 January and it would be useful if there could be a presentation on the INSPIRE programme.</p>	
9	<p><b>SCS/LAA Update</b></p> <p>NR provided an outline of the schedule of events for Leicestershire Together Week. The details of the events and booking arrangements were on the Leicestershire Together website. The LRP’s rural tour would be on the afternoon of Monday 7 December following the LRP Management Board meeting in the morning. VAL’s Social Capital report would be launched at the session on Friday 11 December.</p> <p>NR gave a brief synopsis of the work being done in respect of Total Place which was considering expenditure by the largest public bodies in the sub-region. As a pilot, ‘deep dive’ work examining drugs and alcohol expenditure had identified where measures could be taken to improve outcomes for service users, at a lower cost.</p> <p>A review of the SCS was planned and there was the prospect of a refresh of the LAA targets. If an LAA3 came into being, it would be advantageous to have an updated SCS already in place. AG stated his disquiet about the amount of similar work that was being to increase efficiency, and that activity was seemingly being carried out through separate exercises. For instance, the LAA, MAA, and Total Place appeared to operate independently. AG was of the view that the most</p>	

	<p>important consideration was to concentrate on work that could actively improve the experience of the end user. NR commented that work was being done to try to tie together the different forms of assessment through the Public Service Board. KL commented that one of the major issues that the public sector failed to grasp was that once programmes had outlived their useful life they had to be culled.</p>	
10	<p><b>Draft LRP Management Board Agenda</b>  There was a brief discussion of the proposed agenda. Of particular interest was the fact that Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council was working with Essex Rural Commission.</p>	
11	<p><b>Quarterly Project Monitoring 2009/10 – Quarter 2 (July – September)</b>  The reports were approved. RT enquired about the security of funding for housing associations. RM stated that funding had been reduced, and funds were now being provided on a year-on-year basis.</p> <p>RS commented about the work that was being done in respect of community ICT infrastructure websites for Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire. This would benefit people living in the parts of Leicestershire that border these counties.</p>	
12	<p><b>AOB</b>  BS informed the Group that RSN manifesto had been launched. This could possibly be used to support the argument for improved broadband in rural areas, and could also help inform the EMRAF Framework document.</p>	
	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates:</b>  <b>All meetings will commence at 9am - volunteers for venues would be greatly appreciated.</b>  Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010  Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010  Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010  Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010  Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010  Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010  Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010  Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010</p>	

# Rural Strategy and Performance Group

10:00 – 12:00 Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009

**Glenfield Parish Rooms, Glenfield**  
Park House, Stamford Street, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8DL

## MINUTES

Item		Action
1	<p><b>Chairman's Introduction</b> Andrew Granger welcomed everyone to the meeting</p>	
	<p><b>Introductions and apologies</b></p> <p><b>Apologies</b> Gill Smitherman (L&amp;L Support Unit) Charlene Arnold (East Midlands Business) Lynn Aisbett (Melton Borough Council) Nicole Rickard (Leicestershire County Council)</p> <p><b>Attendees</b> Jonathan Clarkson (Leicestershire County Council) Matthew Kempson (Leicestershire County Council) Andrew Granger (Andrew Granger and Co) – Chair Philip Bailey (Leicestershire County Council) Bob Scott (Leicestershire Constabulary) Jeremy Prescott (RCC) Richard Tulloch (emda) Richard Mugglestone (Midlands Rural Housing) Sandra Whiles (Blaby District Council - representing district councils in place of Lynn Aisbett) Kevan Liles (Voluntary Action LeicesterShire) David Friesner (Leicester Shire Promotions) Peter Williams (Leicestershire County Council) Caroline Mackay (Leicestershire County Council) Mandip Rai (L&amp;L Support Unit – in place of Gill Smitherman)</p> <p><b>By invitation</b> Clive Keble (National Forest Company)</p>	
2	<p><b>Minutes and Matters Arising of last meeting</b> Minutes of the meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> August 2009 were agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Midlands Rural Action Plan: JP stated that the Action Plan would be considered at EMRAF's Operations Group on 16 October and would then be go to the EMRAF Forum on 11 November to be signed off. MK thought that given the drastic changes required, it had been decided that partners would be consulted again before publication of the final Action Plan. MK to consult Angie Essom to clarify the current state of affairs with regards to the finalisation of the Action Plan.</li> <li>• JP reported that Angie Essom would be leaving EMRAF at the end of October.</li> <li>• Multi Access Centres: BS reported that the Police are very keen to be involved in the promotion of the centres.</li> <li>• PW commented that under 217 (Leicestershire Together Update) of</li> </ul>	<p><b>MK</b></p>

	<p>the Management Board meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009 it was stated that 'There appears to be little priority paid to be climate change within the LAA2 indicators'. PW did not agree with this assessment, as there are two climate change indicators in LAA2.</p>	
3	<p><b>Making Woods Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clive Keble of the National Forest Company provided an update on the Woodland Economy Programme.</li> <li>• The Making Woods Work (MWW) is a major strand of the Woodland Economy Programme and is focused upon the development of the woodland related economy across the National Forest. MWW has developed out of the previous WEBS (Woodland Economy Business Support) programme that ran from 2005/6–2007/8. MWW will seek to encourage greater collaboration and integration with related sectors such as tourism, energy, craft, construction, recreation and leisure. There have been particularly good examples of successful woodland projects elsewhere, such as in the Weald and the Chilterns.</li> <li>• In practical terms there are two different types of forest cover which require different approaches in order to maximise their economic value. The first type is the older woodlands, which have the greater tourism and recreational appeal. The second is 'young adult' forest cover which is in the thicket stage and requires intervention. The forestry techniques required to manage the young adult trees creates the opportunity to increase the production of woodchips and develop the woodfuel market.</li> <li>• CK summarised the various aspects of the MWW programme which include trade and industry events, continuation of development work with local businesses and landowners, the development and possible extension of the Wood Fair to a two day event, and the proposed development of NVQ qualifications in association with BTCV.</li> <li>• The funding for MWW has recently been approved by emda and will run from will run from late 2009 until March 2012. The membership of the Steering Group will include the LRP.</li> </ul>	
4	<p><b>Local Economic Assessment – emerging conclusions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MK summarised the discussion at the previous Management Board meeting when it was decided to pursue the option to embed rural throughout this document together with a rural discussion chapter.</li> <li>• MK explained that LRP comments had been incorporated into the Business and Enterprise chapter of the assessment, but comments still needed to be made on the other chapters.</li> <li>• MR stated that the Economic Assessment had been considered at the Co-ordination Group and had also been presented to the Business Council. MR made it known that the draft of the Economic Assessment and the associated performance framework was to be considered at all of the other Strategy and Performance Group meetings later in October. MR indicated that the Rural Strategy and Performance Group would need to submit comments on the draft Economic Assessment and the draft performance framework by the end of October.</li> </ul> <p><b>Regional Evidence Base</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There followed a discussion about emda's consultation on their Evidence Base for the Regional Economic Strategy. PW thought that we should be looking at the key elements rather than going through the entire document. MK stated that there would be a sub-regional</li> </ul>	

	<p>response that would be coordinated by the Research and Information team at LCC. PB would prepare a paper that would highlight rural issues in relation to the Evidence Base and would e-mail this to the Group for comment in advance of emda's closing date of 4 November.</p>	<b>PB</b>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In September 2009 the Leadership Board and Co-ordination Group agreed that an overarching economic strategy was required for the sub-region. Four key elements are associated with this process: the economic assessment, strategy, delivery planning and strategic commissioning. The strategic commissioning process would happen after April 2010.</li> <li>• MR explained that in the absence of a cross SCS for Leicester and Leicestershire a vision document is being developed for the next 10 years. This would identify the priorities for the sub-region and would be a short document of only 12 pages or so. The detail would be contained in the delivery planning phase.</li> <li>• A visioning exercise would be undertaken by the Leadership Board on 20 November, and there would also be wider consultation earlier in November. AG remarked that the timetable is very tight. As such, there was a reliance on MK to highlight the key aspects that are of relevance to rural areas of the sub-region. RT suggested that having gantt chart/timeline would be useful to help clarify the timing of the various processes.</li> <li>• BS commented that he had some concerns that the process was moving apace and perhaps not all of the members and political leads had been sufficiently engaged in the process. Therefore, it would be of benefit for some outreach to be done. MK commented that in this Group's case, the views of the Management Board would be sought.</li> <li>• It was agreed that there would be a working group of Rural S&amp; P group members before the end of October to comment on the draft Economic Assessment and the draft Performance Framework.</li> </ul>	<b>MK</b>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Food and Drink Coordinator – Project Outline</b></p> <p>PB summarised the work being undertaken with regards to the development of a funding bid for a Food and Drink Sector Coordinator for the sub-region. This summary included details of the existing food and drink sector in the sub-region, together with the need and proposed specification for the Coordinator role. This project had been agreed by the Co-ordination Group and the LRP Management Board.</p> <p>The proposed project outline was approved by the S&amp;P Group, with the following contributions made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism should have a heading within the post specification and the ethnic food sector needed to be highlighted to a greater degree.</li> <li>• There was uncertainty that there was a need for further food and drink groups/networks in the sub-region. It would be preferable to ensure that there is better coordination of what is already in place.</li> <li>• The PCT should be involved as part of the project, as well as food safety representatives.</li> <li>• Advantage should be taken of food and drink opportunities in relation to sports events in the sub-region e.g. events at Donington Park.</li> <li>• There was discussion of the reasons for having a consultant rather</li> </ul>	

	<p>than an employee for this post. It was concluded that a consultant would need to be fully accessible and attention should be paid to ensuring that they would not be distracted from giving their full attention to the project. There were deliberations regarding the management of the consultant, including the contracting of hours and the achievement of task related outcomes. However, until the strategy is produced, it could be difficult to attribute task related outcomes to the Coordinator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was commented that the consultancy approach had worked well for the Woodland Economy Business Support and for the Business Buddies projects that were run through the County Council. There was also discussion regarding the potential to include an inducement/reward to encourage the consultant to work successfully through to the end of the contract.</li> <li>• The main focus should be upon the outcomes of the project rather than a great deal of time being spent on strategy development. It was considered sensible to investigate the possibility of having the food and drink strategy developed through a six month contract, followed by a separate contract for the Coordinator post.</li> <li>• It would be essential to prioritise the workload associated with this post, including the associated need for prioritisation to be a key part of the strategy development process. There should be a more limited menu of activity with regards to the role of the Food and Drink Sector Coordinator in order to increase their impact. It would be important to make sure that full advantage is taken of the support available from personnel in other organisations who could be help to develop of the sub-region's food and drink sector. One such example is the Thinking Food and Farming project.</li> <li>• The management responsibility for the post should rest firmly with the Rural S &amp; P Group, rather than responsibility being split with the Food Strategy Group.</li> <li>• A summary of the project would need to be considered by other S &amp; P Groups.</li> </ul>	PB
7	<p><b>Rural Economic Development – Update</b> Feedback from Co-ordination Group/Leadership Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sub-Regional Investment Plan (SRIP) would be submitted by 23 October 2009.</li> <li>• MR indicated that for 2009/10 the revenue underspend was £600,000, and the projected capital overspend was £3m (assuming that all projects are completed).</li> <li>• MR also referred to the substantial reductions in the emda budget for the next couple of financial years. MR was keen to state that every opportunity should be taken to examine if other sources of funding could be applied to projects that would usually be funded through emda funding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INSPIRE Leicestershire: MK reported that the programme had endorsed at officer level and would be going to the Emda's Board Resources Group for approval in a couple of weeks.</li> <li>• Rural transport – Wheels to Work pilot: CM reported that this pilot had been approved and it was planned that services would be up and running in six weeks time.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-regional Tourism Strategy: MK explained that GS was looking to develop a brief for a sub-regional tourism strategy. DF commented that the Destination Management Plan effectively acts as a sub-regional tourism strategy. Regional and national tourism strategies are being developed at the current time. CK commented that in the case of the National Forest, two detailed tourism documents had been produced which could help with the development of a sub-regional tourism strategy.</li> <li>• Strategy and Performance Group Updates: No updates were given.</li> </ul>	
8	<p><b>SCS/LAA Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Leicestershire Together week would be taking place during the week commencing 7 December. The week of activities would be hosted by individual partners. There presented an opportunity for the LRP to host some site visits.</li> <li>• The Leicestershire Together website had been updated. <a href="http://www.leicestershiretogether.org">www.leicestershiretogether.org</a></li> </ul>	
9	<p><b>Communications and Events Update (Trailer/Brussels)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JC provided details of the itinerary for the two days that the Brussels delegation would be in Leicestershire.</li> <li>• MK stated that a full briefing would be sent out detailing the background with regards to the site visits and proposed discussions.</li> <li>• Although two of the EC delegates had pulled out of visit, MEP Emma McClarkin would now be attending. Fortunately the most senior EC official involved, Lene Naesager, would be able to attend.</li> <li>• MK apologised again to those people who he had to 'uninvite' due to the scaling back of the formalities associated with the reduced delegation.</li> <li>• The two EC officials who had pulled out of the delegation due to their commitments in relation to the Rural Development Programme had expressed an interest in visiting Leicestershire in the New Year.</li> </ul>	
10	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was agreed to meet as a working group on 20 October to discuss the Economic Assessment. All members of the S &amp; P Group to be invited. The papers relating to the updated conclusions of the Economic Assessment would be circulated as soon as possible.</li> <li>• RT reminded the Group that the Action for Market Towns convention would be taking place in Melton Mowbray the following week.</li> <li>• RT referred to the DEFRA consultation on food security.</li> <li>• RT stated that emda was undertaking a piece of research into broadband accessibility and research into the horticultural sector.</li> </ul>	<b>MK</b>
	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates:</b></p> <p><b>All meetings will commence at 9am - volunteers for venues would be greatly appreciated.</b></p> <p>25th November 2009, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2010, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2010, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2010</p>	

## Appendix B: 2009/10 LRP Project Monitoring – Second Quarter (July – Sept 2009)

<p><b>Project title</b> Brief project description <b>(Lead partner)</b></p>	<p><b>Positives (areas going well) / Negatives (areas for concern)</b></p>
<p><b>Community Capacity Building</b></p> <p>The RCC Rural Action Team will offer support to communities who wish to carry out consultation exercises that will identify community needs and will address issues of social inclusion, access to services and encouraging volunteers. The project will build the capacity within the communities to make them stronger and more cohesive and to increase Social Capital. Consultations may include Parish Plans, Village Design Statements and other consultations including one off consultations and events e.g. roadshows. Throughout the project the Community Development team will work with partners and the community to enable them to address current issues together. It is anticipated that action plans resulting from consultations will be presented to District and County LSP's and Community Forums using the LRP protocol to enable actions to be progressed. Groups undertaking plans will be encouraged to progress outcomes and other RCC officers may assist with progressing actions e.g. Village Halls Officer, funding officer.</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b></p> <p><u>1:</u> Communities continue to enhance community cohesion and produce new projects long after the completion of the plan. Some communities are also now looking to enhance the plans done several years ago.</p> <p><u>2:</u> Work with Big Switch Off and climate change resulted in two jointly (RCC &amp; Community) planned events with 2 different communities that were well attended and supported also by LCC Shire Climate Change Grants.</p> <p><u>3:</u> Joint meetings with VAL and Stronger Communities workers giving a greater knowledge of Community Development work in the districts to avoid overlaps.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b></p> <p><u>1:</u> Insufficient capacity to undertake as much facilitation as required in conjunction with participatory budgeting at Community Forums because this had not been anticipated at time of putting workplan together.</p> <p><u>2:</u> Economic downturn may affect future funding again.</p> <p><u>3:</u> Some target communities are proving slow to take up the offers made and other active groups are progressing slower than we would like.</p>
<p><b>Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Housing Enabler (LRRHE)</b></p> <p>The Leicestershire &amp; Rutland Rural Housing Enabler (LRRHE) role exists to promote the development of affordable homes in rural villages for local people who cannot afford to rent or buy a home at existing market levels.</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b></p> <p><u>1:</u> The number of HNS carried out is now well ahead of schedule.</p> <p><u>2:</u> The number of suitable exception sites with a willing vendor is on track.</p> <p><u>3:</u> Refined ways of tackling the problem of affordable rural housing have been investigated. This quarter has seen new development partners engaged and confirmation that 5 schemes are in</p>

<p><b>Project title</b> Brief project description <b>(Lead partner)</b></p>	<p><b>Positives (areas going well) / Negatives (areas for concern)</b></p>
<p>By working closely with Parish Councils and Local Authority partners, the LRRHE is able to identify villages where there is a lack of suitable homes and undertake research to find the true extent of the problem. The LRRHE acts as an independent 'broker' to seek solutions to these problems.</p> <p>Each project begins with guidance from the District/Borough Council as to which villages to target. The support of the Parish Council is then sought for an independent Housing Need Survey to be undertaken by the LRRHE (which involves a questionnaire being delivered to each household in that Parish to assess the local affordable housing need). From the results the LRRHE writes a report detailing the number and mix of affordable homes that are required to meet the need. The report requires approval from both Parish and District/Borough councils before possible sites can be looked for. When suitable land has been identified the projects are passed to Housing Associations for further development, funding and delivery with the LRRHE assisting at all stages.</p> <p>Major outputs and outcomes that can be expected from the project include Housing Needs Surveys completed; sites identified; communities engaged, educated and consulted; and affordable homes for local people delivered in Leicestershire Parishes.</p> <p>The LRRHE aims to independently facilitate affordable homes for local people in rural Leicestershire &amp; Rutland. The work outlined above positively impacts local communities whilst also working towards the affordable housing targets of the Regional Housing Investment Strategy, The Regional Plan, The Regional Housing Strategy, EMRAF's Rural Action Plan, LRP's Rural Strategy, The Sustainable Community Strategy, The LAA and the individual</p>	<p>receipt of HCA grant funding and will deliver 52 homes in the coming 12-18 months.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b></p> <p><u>1:</u> In order that the 'pre development' work carried out by the LRRHE results in affordable homes being built, further development work and bids for HCA grant is reliant on schemes being taken forward by the partner RSLs. Delays, obstacles and financial considerations often occur that cannot be influenced by the LRRHE, therefore control of delivering the projects is taken away from the LRRHE the same 'rural focus' is not always evident from RSLs. This quarter has again seen the recession impacting on the delivery capabilities of partner RSLs. Schemes may not be able to be built unless the HCA grant levels are suitable (see below) and the loan facilities offered by banks to enable schemes to be undertaken are offered at fair rates and without the stipulation that other borrowing be refinanced (which makes a new loan not worth taking on).</p> <p><u>2:</u> Once the schemes are put forward for HCA funding, there is a bid process to go through. It is felt that HCA grant levels for rural schemes are not high enough which often means that schemes are not seen as financially viable unless 'realistic' grant levels are allocated. Less units per £grant invested by the HCA can be delivered in rural areas compared with the national average (which is mostly urban weighted) due to the relatively expensive nature of rural housing (infrastructure costs etc), but grant levels should appreciate rural requirements and allocate the necessary funds.</p> <p><u>3:</u> As always, the long term uncertainty of RHE funding means that posts survive on a year-on-year basis. Midlands Rural Housing continue to secure the necessary funding levels to host the LRRHE post, but longer term funding commitments from existing and selected new project partners would provide longer term security for the post.</p>

<p><b>Project title</b> Brief project description <b>(Lead partner)</b></p>	<p><b>Positives (areas going well) / Negatives (areas for concern)</b></p>
<p>strategies of each Local Authority. The LRRHE project is monitored by a Steering Group and is assessed on targets such as number of Housing Needs Surveys completed, number of Parishes worked in, number of sites found etc.</p>	
<p><b>Vibrant Villages</b></p> <p>Vibrant Villages aims to sustain vital services within the counties rural villages.</p> <p>The programme has three key aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimise the impact of post office closures by providing small capital grants to improve the sustainability of Post Offices that remain, and to support alternative and mobile provision where there is evidenced need.</li> <li>2. Support village shops to ensure that where they are the only local conveniences providing essential goods they are retained and enhanced – this will include supporting shops affected by the Post Office Closure scheme and where possible ensuring access to fresh local produce.</li> <li>3. Enhance local facilities (including community halls or rooms within public houses, schools and churches) by enabling local economic activity and promoting multi-purpose use.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Positive:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>1:</u> One small rural community now has a meeting space</li> <li><u>2:</u> Several village shops are more viable and provide more of a range of essential goods</li> <li><u>3:</u> Several larger community spaces projects have been successfully completed</li> </ol> <p><b>Negative:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>1:</u> Enquiries from retailers have slowed</li> <li><u>2:</u> Requests for retail advice have decreased</li> </ol> <p>(General note: Funds committed are in line with forecast progress.)</p>
<p><b>Programme of Community ICT Projects</b></p> <p>Build on the Community ICT Infrastructure and further engage with and develop communities, businesses, parish councils and voluntary organisations to assist them to exploit the technology</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>1: FreeUse</u></li> </ol> <p>We are working with the Leicestershire Waste Partnership to build a 'FreeUse' website, this website will enable people to give away any unwanted items rather than discarding them, thus reducing waste and land fill. This site will be linked in tightly with leicestershirevillages.com so</p>

<p><b>Project title</b> Brief project description <b>(Lead partner)</b></p>	<p><b>Positives (areas going well) / Negatives (areas for concern)</b></p>
<p>that we have put in place.</p> <p>The work will contribute to the following LRP Strategic Objectives :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger Rural Communities</li> <li>• Improving Accessibility &amp; Information</li> </ul> <p>By focusing the effort into three main areas of work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Parish Council and Voluntary sector ICT support programme.</li> <li>2) Empower communities and businesses and improve access to services in rural areas.</li> <li>3) Further development of the infrastructure to make services more available, accessible and easy to use.</li> </ol> <p>Outcomes: Parishes and Voluntary organisations confidently using technology to improve business efficiency, communications and provide high quality information and on-line services to their customers.</p> <p>Make use of internet technologies to empower individuals, communities, parishes, voluntary organisations and businesses providing them with, a sense of community, interactive tools to enable effective two-way communication and easy access to electronic information and services.</p> <p>Customers able to find services easily (without needing to know who provides them) through an integrated electronic a-z of services.</p> <p>People able to find public and voluntary information including</p>	<p>that people in a village or town can see what's available locally or within other areas of Leicester City and Leicestershire. This site differs from national initiatives in that it provides a clear LeicesterShire focus.</p> <p><u>2: Northamptonshire</u> We are working closely with Northamptonshire County Council and Northants CLAC to roll out the 'Community ICT infrastructure' across Northamptonshire. This as well as providing a benefit for the people of Northamptonshire, will also benefit people that live in Leicestershire bordering Northamptonshire.</p> <p><u>3: General update</u> The work with Parish Councils is progressing well. 8 new parish councils adopted use of the website this quarter, 169 parish councils are now using our technology. We are making good progress on the recruitment of lv volunteers with 2 now being certificated and a further 13 currently being processed.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b></p> <p><u>1: Funding</u> Despite reduced funding this year we are still progressing well towards meeting our KPI's. However reduced marketing activity is resulting in a slower growth in the number of site visits. We are working on a marketing strategy that will hopefully enable us to work smarter to allow us to make up for lost ground during the first part of the year.</p> <p><u>2: Melton District</u> The Melton District Council is the only district in Leicestershire that still provides websites for villages and parishes. This causes confusion to citizens in that district and doesn't provide a countywide 'joined up' service. It doesn't make sense for us to 'compete' using tax payers money and over the next quarter we need to encourage Melton to 'switch their system off' as the other districts have done.</p> <p><u>3: Police</u> Following a meeting with the police earlier this year we modified our infrastructure at their</p>

<p><b>Project title</b> Brief project description <b>(Lead partner)</b></p>	<p><b>Positives (areas going well) / Negatives (areas for concern)</b></p>
<p>transport information quickly and easily.</p> <p>People being able to use technology to 'transact' with service providers at a time to suit them (any time of night or day).</p> <p>This will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build Social Capital</li> <li>• Build Safer Communities</li> <li>• Improve Access to Services</li> <li>• Increase efficiency of service delivery</li> <li>• Support Rural Businesses</li> <li>• Increase Parish Council capacity</li> <li>• Create geographic, Digital and Social inclusion</li> <li>• Foster Volunteering</li> <li>• Promote Community Transport</li> </ul>	<p>request to enable them to automatically post news and events from their website to lv / lp and to provide them with a method to post urgent police messages into the LV ticker. They have not adopted use of either feature so far.</p>
<p><b>Climate Friendly Community Programme</b></p> <p>The aim of this project is to facilitate communities in Leicestershire to work through a framework of actions to become Climate Friendly Communities via partnership working. The process includes raising community awareness about the climate change issues and reducing their impact by developing and implementing a Carbon Reduction Programme.</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b></p> <p><u>1:</u> 2 community events held</p> <p><u>2:</u> SHIRE Community Climate Change Grant launched</p> <p><b>Negative:</b></p> <p><u>1:</u> The Knowledge Transfer protocol between De Montfort University and the LRCC has only just been signed. Thus an appointment can only now be considered of an LRCC based officer to help deliver Climate Friendly Community work</p> <p><u>2:</u> Take up of the new SHIRE Grants has been slow.</p>

## MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

9.30am Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009

24 Main Street, Asfordby, Nr Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 3SA

## LOCATION MAP

(Marked A on maps below)

