

BUCKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



promoting prosperity, tackling inequalities

Minutes

BUCKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

MINUTES OF THE BUCKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2009, IN MISSENDEN ABBEY CONFERENCE CENTRE, GREAT MISSENDEN, COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.52 PM.

Members Present

Mr A Busby	Chairman of South Bucks LSP/Leader of SBDC
Ms J Clarke	Chair, The Ridgeway Partnership Trust Board
Mrs L Clarke	Chairman of Wycombe LSP/Leader of WDC
Mr M Colston	Chairman of Healthy Communities Partnership
Mr D Ebdon	Chairman, Chiltern LSP
Mr S George	Chair, Buckinghamshire PCT Trust Board
Ms J Goddard	Economic Development Director, LSC TV
Ms J Godden	Chair, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust Board
Ms J Hunt	Voluntary Impact
Mr M Hunt	Encompass
Mrs S Imbriano	Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services and Representative of Buckinghamshire Children's Trust
Ms S Knollys	Joint Director of Strategy & System Reform, Buckinghamshire Hospitals Trust
Mr P Loose	Adult Commissioners
Mr P Martin	BALC
Mr A Pratt OBE	Chair, Bucks Economic and Learning Partnership
Mr W Ralls	Area Director, SEEDA
Mr D Rowlands	Chairman, Bucks Fire Authority
Mr D Shakespeare OBE	Leader of BCC
Chief Superintendent Paul Tinnion	Chairman of the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board
Ms L Walton	Business Representative
Mr J Warder	Leader of CDC
Mr W Whyte	Chair, Aylesbury Vale LSP

Observers

Mr C Furness, Observer - Chief Executive, SBDC
Mr A Goodrum, Observer - Chief Executive, CDC
Mr A Grant, Observer - Chief Executive, AVDC
Mr E Macalister-Smith, Observer - Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire PCT
Ms K Satterford, Observer - Chief Executive, WDC
Mr C Williams, Observer - Chief Executive - Buckinghamshire County Council

Officers

Mrs S Ashmead, Corporate Manager, Policy and Performance
Mrs J Fisk, Policy Officer (Local Area Agreement)

Guests

Mr R Hathaway, Audit Commission
Dr J O'Grady, BCC & Buckinghamshire PCT
Mr J Plenderleith, Chairman Consortium of Bucks CABs
Mr D Walker, Audit Commission

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Jim Booth (Chief Executive, Thames Valley Police Authority), John Cartwright (Leader of Aylesbury Vale District Council) and Rita Lally (Chairman of Adult Commissioners).

Members noted that Peter Loose, Head of Service, Commissioning and Business Improvement, Adult Social Care, was attending as a substitute for Rita Lally for the duration of the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2008 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

4 SETTING THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Summary of Economic Development Strategy

Alex Pratt OBE gave a presentation and made the following points:

- BELP (Bucks Economic and Learning Partnership) was seeking to present Buckinghamshire in a professional way. Assets (such as employment land) needed to be unlocked to enable this to happen.
- A National Enterprise Academy had opened the previous day, which would be based in Aylesbury. It would bring together students aged 16-18 years who were interested in enterprise.
- It was critically important that ways were found of avoiding unnecessary failures in the business community.
- There was a current drought in liquidity and this was leading to a large number of job losses. BELP was working to provide some hard data on the current financial situation, to enable robust opinions to be formed.

Update on Public Sector Perspective

Ed Macalister-Smith, Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire PCT, then spoke about the effects of the economic downturn on the public sector, and specifically on the Primary Care Trust (PCT). Ed Macalister-Smith said the following:

- There was currently an underlying financial deficit of approximately £15m (on a total spend of £600m per year). The deficit was not related to the national economic downturn. The PCT in Buckinghamshire had a low level of financial allocation (c.18% lower than the national average).
- Over the next two years the PCT would only receive approximately £4m extra in central funding, after netting off inflation and mandatory requirements. The PCT would therefore need to find 5% headroom in the annual £600m, which would be challenging. The aim was to move into the top decile of productivity nationally.
- Buckinghamshire had 30% more GPs than the national average based on weighted population.
- The PCT wanted to contribute more strongly to the BSP Board and also wanted to be more visible in the Economy and Environment workstream. The PCT could for instance be a strong source of employment for younger people, and spent most of its £600m into the Buckinghamshire economy.
- The PCT was a commissioning organisation, and the principle way of balancing its books was to reduce work flow. This was potentially a huge challenge for the relationship between the PCT and the residents of Buckinghamshire.
- All organisations needed to work together to ensure that there were no 'gaps' in services into which vulnerable people could 'fall.'

Update on Voluntary Sector Perspective

James Plenderleith, Chairman of the Consortium of Bucks Citizens' Advice Bureaus (CABs), told the Board the following:

- There were four Citizens' Advice Bureaus (CABs) in Buckinghamshire.
- The Bureaus were moving towards a more effective business model for delivering free advice to Buckinghamshire residents.
- CABs employed approximately 230 people across the county, 36 of whom were paid advisors. There were 142 volunteers who each did a minimum of 7 hours work per week. There were also 45 trustees.
- CABs in Buckinghamshire had total funding of £774 000 per year. Just under ⅓ of this funding was from local authorities. CABs did not receive any Government funding. CABs welcomed service level agreements for any funding they received.
- CABs were audited every three years. The audit was very tough, and if a Bureau failed the audit, that franchise would be lost.
- The use of volunteers was a very positive and important way of delivering advice. In addition, if the CAB moved from using volunteers to using paid staff, it would need an extra £1m per year in funding.
- The CAB had a holistic approach to dealing with people's problems. CABs provided information, advice and support. Topics for advice included benefits, debt, employment, housing, legal and family matters.
- Approximately 0.5m people across the County fell within the CAB remit. About 3% of these were seen each year.
- CABs worked with the PCT, Age Concern, Relate, Housing Associations, etc, and acted as a signpost to these services. CABs had an excellent relationship with the District Councils.
- The last quarter of 2008 had shown approximately 15% more people seeking advice from the CAB. Debt issues had increased by about 40% on the previous year (these had increased by 66% in the High Wycombe area). Housing related queries had increased by 20%. Advice regarding mortgage arrears had increased by 66% in the Buckingham area and by 100% in the Chiltern area.
- Queries regarding credit cards had fallen, although queries regarding unsecured loans had increased by 20%. Queries regarding redundancy had increased by 20% and were

still increasing.

- Queries regarding divorce and separation had fallen in number, which was believed to be due to the fall in house prices and the difficulty in being able to sell property. Queries regarding domestic violence had increased, which was worrying.
- James Plenderleith referred the Board to an article from the Daily Telegraph which stated that nationally CAB queries on debt issues had risen by 51%.
- CABs were concerned for the future and feared a reduction or loss of funding. Two CABs had been lost in the UK due to tendering by Community Advice Centres.
- Gateway phone interviews and partnership working were both areas for development in the near future. Some CABs now had kiosks in place to allow clients to access the Internet.

James Plenderleith referred the Board to the Advice Guide Website - <http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/> .

Chris Williams, Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Children's Trust, then led a workshop session. Members of the Board split into five groups for a two-part workshop which focused on:

(a) **The effect of the economic downturn on different areas.** Participants were asked to consider the potential impact of the economic downturn on Buckinghamshire for the particular area under consideration; what we are already doing to address this impact; and what areas need developing further. The detailed notes from the sessions are attached.

The main issues summarised during the plenary session were:

- **Businesses:** Businesses needed in Buckinghamshire which were able to grow and develop – the real game is the long-term one, and focus needs to be on supporting this long-term view.
- **Voluntary and Community Sector:** Some substantial challenges anticipated in capacity but also opportunities as an increased number of volunteers would become available
- **Vulnerable people, including older people:** Need better access to advice and support for vulnerable people. Also, awareness of changing requirements – would 'vulnerable' be a different category during economic downturn than before?
- **Housing** – issues in the north regarding growth agenda. Pressures in the south to maintain the green environment. Also issues arising from social tensions due to financial downturn.
- **Resilience of public sector:** Increased demand on public services, but decreased ability for those services to raise money. Need to maintain front-line staff where possible. Need to combine functions and co-locate where possible.

(b) **The Review of the Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS).** Participants were asked to focus on one of the following emerging themes for the SCS and consider whether these were the most appropriate themes, discuss in the light of the headline CAA questions, and discuss whether there were any differences across the county which needed to be reflected:

1. Thriving Economy (How strong is the local economy?)
2. Health and Wellbeing (How healthy and well supported are people? How good is the well-being of children and young people? How well are families supported?)
3. Cohesive Communities. (How strong and cohesive are local communities? How well is inequality being addressed?)
4. Sustainable Environment. (How well is housing need met? How environmentally sustainable is the area? How well kept is the area?)
5. Safe Communities. (How safe is the area?)

In the plenary session, the key points raised by the Board regarding the emerging themes for

the SCS were:

- Transport/accessibility should be a theme in its own right.
- The changing nature of Buckinghamshire in a time of growth and demographic change needed to have a higher focus in the SCS (e.g. ageing population in south, increasing number of young people in the north of the County, but a greater number of schools in the south of the County etc).
- The importance of cross-boundary working, with multiple partnerships addressing issues coherently.

Chris Williams said that the BSP Implementation Group had proposed that an economic summit be held. Members endorsed this idea and said that it would help to bring everyone to the same level of understanding about the financial situation. However the summit would need to take place promptly to have clear and practical outcomes:

- Be clear about what was going to happen as a result of the summit.
- Manage expectations about what can be provided.
- Need for a co-ordinated partnership action plan re response to the economic downturn – expressing the collaborative advantage of working together to better effect.
- Action plan needs to be based on hard evidence.

Decision Taken – an Economic Summit to be arranged.

5 BSPIG UPDATE REPORT

Jackie Fisk, Policy Officer, referred the Board to the update Report on the BSP Implementation Group. There would be further reports in due course regarding the LAA Pooled Fund.

Noted:

The Board noted the progress of the LAA at the 6 month point.

The Board noted the BSP Implementation Group decisions on the allocation of the LAA Pooled Fund.

6 COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

The Chairman welcomed Robert Hathaway and David Walker from the Audit Commission, who took members through a short presentation (attached).

The current inspection processes (including the Comprehensive Performance Assessment) would be consolidated from 2009 and replaced by the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The CAA would look at collective responsibility and joint working rather than the work of individual organisations. The Audit Commission would carry out the inspections, and it was noted that the Audit Commission was independent of the Government Office for the South East.

Partnership working would be vital for success in the CAA.

A member asked if the CAA would generate additional funding for Buckinghamshire. Rob Hathaway said that the CAA was designed to be a stimulus for improvement, and would not generate resources (unless performance was unacceptably low).

A member asked if the CAA would require current resources to become even more stretched. Rob Hathaway said that the Audit Commission would seek to work with organisations, and would base the work on existing performance management systems.

7 HEALTHY COMMUNITIES STRATEGY - UPDATE/FINAL DRAFT

Mike Colston, Chairman of the Healthy Communities Partnership, and Jane O'Grady,

Director of Public Health, spoke to the Board about the Healthy Communities Strategy. The Healthy Communities Partnership drew together and monitored the work of partner agencies and then reported these to the BSP Board. BSP Board members had previously commented on the draft Healthy Communities Strategy, and the comments had been incorporated in the Strategy. The Strategy had then gone to the Local Strategic Partnerships and published on the web.

A member referred to the amended Strategy and the request by Youth Action for representation on the HCP. Jane O'Grady said that the request was being considered. The Healthy Communities Strategy would take into account the economic downturn and some workstreams, e.g. on welfare benefits and child poverty, would help to support people during the downturn.

Agreed:

The BSP Board endorsed the amended strategy and would recommend it to their individual organisations or partnerships for adoption.

8 AOB

Michael Hunt (Encompass) said that he was the BSP Board representative on the Rural Forum for the South-East, which was working to raise the profile of rural affairs. Michael Hunt said that an update would be sent out with the Minutes (attached) and that there were papers available which BRAG (Buckinghamshire Rural Affairs Group) had prepared.

9 DATE AND VENUE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

31 March 2009, 2:30pm to 4:30pm, Silverstone Circuit, Northamptonshire, NN12 8TN

7 July 2009, 2:30pm to 4:30pm, Lane End Conference Centre

Jackie Fisk, Policy Officer, asked members for any suggestions regarding the agenda for the next meeting. It had been suggested that the focus be on the Environment.

CHAIRMAN

Detailed table discussions

Workshop 1: Effects of the Economic Downturn

Table 1: - IMPACT ON BUSINESSES

Credit Crunch / Recession

- Resilient
- Ambition / growth
- Discretionary spend

Entrepreneurial activity ↓

Wages ↓

Skills Pool

Generating wealth → impact on community

What are we doing now?

- Continuing employment service SEEDA
- Business link
- Paying bills in the public sector early. WDC, AVDC

Negative

- Empty property rate relief

What needs Developing?

Short term:

- “Shop window”
- “Town revitalisation”
- Confidence, critical mass
- Buy local = value for money

Long term:

- Growth Sector
- Entrepreneurial culture

Table 2: ECONOMIC DOWNTURN: FOCUS ON IMPACT ON VCS

- More volunteers available - but they will need support and training
- Higher volume of demand for services
- Changing nature of demand
- Reduction in charitable donations, business support, pressure on local authority funding
- Make it easier to recruit to 'caring' roles
- Recalibration leads to changing expectations

What are we doing?

- Joining up across sector - need to do more - opportunity for efficiencies, unsticking entrenched positions
- Service improvement
- Different types of people will be vulnerable now, than we have seen previously

What to do

- Identify and take advantage of pools of funding for regeneration etc
- Volunteers - develop training and upskilling, potentially to help them get back into jobs in the future
- Outreach activity - opportunities to connect advisory services together, sharing premises etc, provide one-stop shop for clients
- Creativity - leisure and cultural activities - create energy and enthusiasm
- BSP needs to support the VCS in extending its capacity - VCS needs to respond and ensure it tackles inefficiencies.

Table 3: ECONOMIC DOWNTURN: FOCUS ON VULNERABLE GROUPS, INCLUDING OLDER PEOPLE

WHO IS VUNERABLE?

- People out of work or at risk of losing it
- Young people out of education
- Those traditionally defined as vulnerable (ill health, ethnic groups, young but ill-educated etc.)
- Those trying to deal with threat of economic deprivation

IMPACT

- Hard data emerging
- Some agencies coming under increased pressure when under financial pressure themselves
- Mental and physical health deteriorates
- Some lower paid jobs easier to recruit to
- Societal pressures
- Fuel poverty
- Domestic violence
- Greater uptake of public sector provision e.g. bus passes to continuing care

BUT TIME LAG!

TO DO LIST

- Better access to advice and support – especially to those who don't / can't access it currently
- More co-ordinated advice
- Media for advice
- Free school meals
- Projects on welfare benefits and fuel poverty etc.!
- Harnessing volunteering

ALREADY IN PLACE

- Concessionary schemes
- Advice and guidance
- Training and employment support
- Benefits and homelessness services / guidance
- Sweating the existing strategies that impact on the vulnerable

Table 5: ECONOMIC DOWNTURN: FOCUS ON RESILIENCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR

Run on reserves

- people and finance
- pressure on central government for funding
- service reductions

Reduction in income

- parking / fees
- further cuts in staff numbers

Re-prioritise

- pressure to reduce “nice to do”
- ask communities

Priority on “green” services

Increased demand for some services

Private → Public shift

Increase stress / health

Increase in residential crime

Increase in demand for advice

Domestic based issues

Reduction in discretionary spending

ACTIONS

Reductions in discretionary spend (Xmas lights etc)

Increase council tax (within capping)

Promote “welfare benefits”

Reduction in management posts

Partnerships / joint arrangements

Demand management – reduce the need for services

Maintain front line staff / services + rationalise corporate overheads + co-location

Maintain front line

Co-ordinate back office reductions

Workshop 2: Sustainable Community Strategies review – setting strategic priorities

Table 1: focus on thriving economy theme:

AVDC	1000 jobs / yr net+ HBOS (?)	
CDC	global play – GE <u>London</u> Small business / entrepreneurial	R U R A L
SBDC	London + TV entrepreneurial Pinewood	
WDC	Losing mfg Retail ↑ Knowledge based sector	

Missing 2/3 growth / large business - sustainable
Infrastructure – planning

Table 3: focus on cohesive communities theme

COMMUNITY COHESIVENESS (And inequality)

- Common “enemy” can aid cohesion but doesn’t reduce inequality
- Opportunity for local leadership to improve cohesion
- Need to improve measurement of “cohesion”
- Reducing inequalities – “fairer shares” can reduce cohesiveness because of resentment

Table 4: focus on sustainable environment theme

SUSTAINABILITY

- Downturn is an opportunity to promote energy saving, use of communities, rather than top-down
- Need a public understanding of sustainability and its importance
- Divide between issues in North (growth = pressure on resources, environment etc) and south (pressure on green space, affordability might improve)
- S. agenda might centre around raising chances of helping people live where they work, children staying in their area etc. This can be advanced during a house price correction
- More innovative thinking around public services linked to need e.g. Street lighting on only when needed and not all the time
- Changes to behaviour can be encouraged in recycling, water use etc. because people less focused on money and can be encouraged to see benefits of “community” and “civic pride”
- Public sector purchasing power can influence behaviour of companies etc. to the benefit of sustainability

Table 5: focus on safe communities theme

Bucks is safe

Crime levels going down

People do not feel safe

Anti social behaviour

Perception of youth

Problems of night time economy

Drug and alcohol problems (especially rural areas – driving)

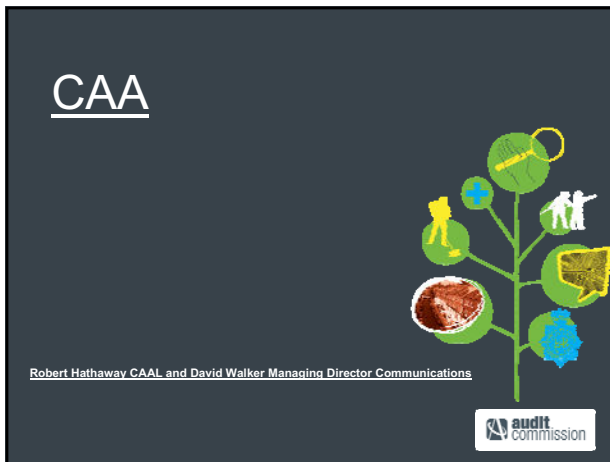
More crime in south

Neighbourhood level data

Monitor local circumstances

Campaign to restrict alcohol to central govt

Education for young people re sensible drinking



What is CAA?

- Catalyst for better local outcomes for people, better partnership working, more responsive services and better value for money
- Source of information and independent assurance for citizens, service users and taxpayers
- Independent evidence base for central government on progress against national priorities
- Means of rationalising and coordinating inspection

2



Area assessment – three key questions

- How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?
- How well are the outcomes and improvements needed being delivered?
- What are the prospects for future improvement?

Focus on priority outcomes targeted within Local Area Agreements and Sustainable Community Strategies

3



Public Reporting

- Area based and directed at multiple audiences
- We need (and are developing) a less jargon-ridden writing style
- Stimulus to improvement –area focus on what matters most

4





Your local area

Assessing the quality of life where you live

You are here: [Home](#) > [Your Local Area](#) > [Barshire In Summary](#)

My Barshire, in summary


Barshire

- Barshire "at a glance"
- Quality of life in Barshire - the area assessment in detail
- How are your local services performing?
- Performance Data
- Compare with similar areas
- Download the full report
- Inspections and performance of other local services
- Contact your local public services
- How to get involved?





Search for another area

Demonstration site, Indicative only

Local innovation and excellence in Barshire

-  Green Significantly reduced energy consumption and CO2 emissions
-  Green Excellent employment prospects

Where different action is needed to deliver desired improvements

-  Red Affordable housing
-  Red Community relations
-  Red Educational attainment
-  Red Providing choice in social care

Fifty-eight per cent of people in Barshire are satisfied with their area as a place to live compared to an average of 64 per cent in similar areas and 62 per cent nationally. More needs to be done to help make sure that people coming into Barshire can integrate with existing communities. More affordable housing is needed in Barshire but not enough is being done to develop more housing to meet the needs of local people.

Barshire's public services are getting better at protecting the environment. They are using much less energy to heat and power their own buildings. They are also helping local people to reduce the energy they use and many people have been given free advice and cheaper insulation.

The economy in Barshire is growing. More and more people are being helped to get jobs.



Priorities for Rural Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Submission to Rural Forum for the South East

In August 2008 the Buckinghamshire Rural Affairs Group (BRAG) issued the Rural Strategy 2008 -2012 for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. The Rural Strategy presents a comprehensive picture of the state of rural Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and identifies the key strategic priorities for the next 4 years.

Whilst the county is blessed with wonderful countryside, rural communities face significant pressures and require greater support to manage the tremendous changes they face. Some of these issues, such as the decline in traditional land based industries, planning constraints creating tensions between the need for economic diversification and the desire to preserve the natural environment, and the impact of high house prices, have been prevalent for many years. Others, such as the evolving growth around Aylesbury and Milton Keynes (including its implications on community cohesion, infrastructure needs and speed of change), concerns about environmental issues and climate change, the changing global economic scene (eg high food and fuel prices) and the effects of the recession present new challenges and opportunities for the future.

In light of the state of rural Buckinghamshire six strategic priorities for the county have been identified:

- ❖ Increasing the provision and accessibility of local services and facilities
- ❖ Improving transport opportunities
- ❖ Providing high quality affordable housing in market towns and villages
- ❖ Maintaining a high quality countryside and natural environment
- ❖ Supporting a dynamic rural economy and encouraging enterprise
- ❖ Developing community self-confidence

An extensive action plan has been prepared alongside the Rural Strategy setting out nearly 100 actions or interventions to address the six strategic priorities. The top five actions identified by BRAG for the coming year are:

- ❖ Increase opportunities to develop community shops/post offices to boost local service provision.
- ❖ Extend community transport provision, particularly to access health service facilities.
- ❖ Implement a county-wide Rural Housing Enabling Partnership to promote future rural exception housing schemes.
- ❖ Ensure the LEADER funds stimulate economic development activity.
- ❖ Encourage rural communities to undertake community-led appraisals as a means of supporting and developing their local communities, and addressing environmental issues.

Successful implementation of the actions is dependent on effective partnership working with local authorities, community groups and regional agencies, such as SEEDA, and securing appropriate funding streams.

The Rural Strategy grew out of extensive research of relevant datasets, policies and strategies, and was completed through a comprehensive consultation programme with interested stakeholders, groups and individuals. As such the key messages and suggested actions of the Rural Strategy are soundly based and evidenced.

From: Michael Hunt [Michael@bucks-comm-action.org.uk]
Sent: 30 January 2009 11:13

As promised email below with update on the rural forum. The attached word document has the priorities that have been submitted to GOSE.

Key points of update in relation to the Rural Forum for the South East.

The first meeting of the Rural Forum for the South East was held on 5 November 2008. The Forum replaces the South East Rural Forum (SERF) and forms an important part of revised governance arrangements designed to strengthen the voice of rural communities within the South East Region, including a new Rural Board which has regularly meetings with relevant ministers and government departments.

Membership of the Rural Forum is drawn from Local Strategic Partnerships, county rural forums and rural community councils. Michael Hunt attended on behalf of the Buckinghamshire Strategic Partnership and Buckinghamshire Community Action (the Rural Community Council). Representatives from the Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe and Chiltern Local Strategic Partnerships and the Buckinghamshire Rural Affairs Group (BRAG) also attended the meeting.

The terms of reference of the forum were agreed at the meeting, along with other governance and accountability issues and assessment of the extent of rural proofing activity in each county area. A brief overview of key rural issues across the region was also discussed and further work to generate a clear picture of strategic rural concerns was initiated.

The next meeting will be held on 5 March and will focus on defining the top rural priorities for the South East. The priorities that BRAG has submitted as part of this are attached.

