

# RURAL HOUSING ENABLER PROJECT MEETING

At Exmoor House, Dulverton  
10.30am, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2005

## 1 Chairman

It was agreed at the last project Group meeting to have a rotating Chair. Barbara Vern volunteered to be this meetings Chair person.

## 2 Attendance and Apologies

Attending:	Jo Cox	-RHE North Devon, Exmoor & West Somerset
	Barbara Vern	- North Devon District Council (NDDC)
	Chris France	- Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)
	Tracey Blackmore	- Exmoor National Park Authority
	John Clements	- Exmoor National Park Authority
	Justin Roxburgh	- Falcon Rural Housing
	Chris Blake	- Countryside Agency
	Graham Mansbridge	- North Devon Homes
	Diana Pyle	- Housing Corporation
	Jennifer Gould	- Magna, West Somerset
	Anjie Mellett	- West Somerset District Council
Apologies:	Roger Webber	- Exmoor National Park Authority

## 3 Minutes of Last Meeting

Approval of minutes

Point 9 of the last minutes stated that the Housing Corporation was having 70,000

Deleted (*doesn't seem to make sense*)

## 4 Welcome to Jo Cox

**CF** welcomed Jo Cox to the post and informed the group that Jo will be starting the post, full time from the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2005.

## 5 Consideration of desirability of publishing the minutes

John Clements (**JC**) had sought advice from Exmoor National Park Authority's Solicitor on this matter. The Solicitor's advice was that it is not required by law to make the minutes of these meetings public. It might be desirable to publish the minutes and to note confidential items.

**CB**, commented that this is a public funded project and that the information should be available to the public but he would suggest just taking out sensitive information.

**Action point 1** – It was agreed from this point for Jo Cox to make the minutes of these meeting available for 'open' inspection.

## 6 Nature of the role of the project (needs/site led approach)

It was agreed that the project is, in principle, is needs led, but occasionally we will have site led opportunities. It was felt that site led opportunities should be shared with the group at an early stage in order to consider the implications on the workloads and priorities.

7 Future direction of the project (including funding, and potential employment of project Assistance).

**CF** thanked Tracey Blackmore for all her work on the Rural Housing Project.

**CF** went on to report that good work has been achieved over the first three years of the project but we now need to shift our emphasis on to delivery.

**JR** expressed his concerns and feels that we need to deliver some housing before anymore surveys are completed.

**GM** asked if a site came forward could a survey be done?

**BV** stated that being one of the original members of this group, this project has always been needs led.

**BV** reported that a site and need led approach is still appropriate for this project and the project is delivering to its normal expectations. There will be a focus on delivery where a survey has been completed and survey reports are to be streamlined.

Funding an additional post

**JC** reported she felt the role of her post is to 'push' forward with delivery and to look at the more strategic angle of the post. She would like to have an assistant to collate survey and complete survey reports and to have communication with persons having queries about the project etc.

**CF** explained that Trudy had completed a break down of costs that was available for this assistance post this consists of an under spend from previous years of approximately £6000, additional funding commitments (from Magna £2,000 and NDH £1,000). There is 10,000 from 2<sup>nd</sup> home money and 10,000 possibly from North Devon District.

John Clements (**JC**) indicated that this would be a temporary post.

**CB** had some reservations, he explained to the group that the RHE funding is to be reabsorbed into DEFRA and they are redistributing all funding into one pot.

He thought each sub - region would have around £250,000 (this is speculative) and bids have to come from local areas i.e. the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's) and LSPS will prioritise where the funding should be spent. The allocation process of this money may not be that 'Cut & Dry' thought as one county may perhaps receive more money.

In the instance of funding this project you will need the support of Exmoor National Park Authority, North Devon District Council and West Somerset District Council there is consultation on this process on the 20<sup>th</sup> June. An event planned on the 21<sup>st</sup> July at Bridgewater and it is extremely important that you attend this and that both LSP's (for Devon and Somerset) are supporting this project.

**BV** sums up to states that it is all agreed that an assistance post of 6 months (full time) with the advert stating a possible extension of this contract.

<b>Action point 2</b> – To finalise job description for assistance post and to send out job advert in local papers.
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**CB** stated that April 2006 is when funding could potentially 'run out' for this project.

The group decided a budget forecast is needed by the end of the year.

**JC** to be made aware that **BV** and **AM** need to know in September the projects short fall if DEFRA don't provide any additional funding.

**Action point 3** – For Jo Cox to clarify to BV and AM the short fall of the project by September – so they can bid for additional funding, for the project.

## 8 Project Progress

Spreadsheet to be circulated (via E-mail) with updates for reference

North Molton

East Anstey

Brayford

Dunster

Exford

Knowstone

Dulverton

Lynton

West Down

Mortehoe

Brushford

Brendon & Countisbury

Parracombe

Bratton Fleming

Stogumber

Carhampton

Stogursey

Porlock

Old Cleave

Exmoor

Cutcombe

Horwood

Bicknoller

**- It was agreed that all allocations are to be discussed at this group and for future bids to be made 'open'.**

## 9 Any Other Business

- **JR** asked about the Housing Corporation bidding round in July
- **DP** replied that yes, the bidding round will take place in July and could involve looking at major future sites of more than 2 years.
- **JR** asked the Planning Officers what is a sustainable number of homes?
- **CF** replied that we would involve Jo input into this at look at survey results and the policy criteria.
- **John Clements** stated the Authority has to make a planning judgment and would also take any other relevant advice into consideration.

## 10 Date of Next Meeting

**4<sup>th</sup> October @ 2.00 pm, Exmoor House**  
**30<sup>th</sup> November @ 10.30 am, Exmoor House**