

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM: MEMBERS**

**REPORT NUMBER E177**

**TO: STRATEGY**

**DATE OF MEETING 10 November 2005**

**REPORTS FROM MEMBERS**

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED THE FOLLOWING:-

- (a) REPORT ON THE SPARSE MEETING 12 SEPTEMBER 2005 BY MR R E KEMP
- (b) REPORT ON THE RURAL COMMISSION MEETING 13 SEPTEMBER 2005 BY MR R E KEMP
- (c) REPORT ON THE ANNUAL RURAL CONFERENCE MEETING 14 SEPTEMBER 2005 BY MR R E KEMP
- (d) REPORT ON THE EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY BY MR P JONES

**CONTACT: Linda Sheppard**

**DIRECT LINE: 01473 826610**

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM: Councillor Richard Kemp**

**REPORT NUMBER E**

**TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**DATE OF MEETING 10 November 2005**

**SPARSE MEETING : 12 SEPTEMBER 2005**

The main item on the Agenda was the Analysis of the Finance Settlement consultation by Rita Hale Associates.

Quite clearly, as we are all aware, the Government Grant Settlements tend to favour urban areas rather than our own rural area. During the session we went through the questions and framed the SPARSE response to Government. I have tabled this paper marked 'A' for Members to look at.

The minutes of the Sub Core Group dealing specifically with rural issues were looked at. I have tabled a copy of these for Members to look at. Paper marked 'B'.

One of the minor success stories of SPARSE has been the campaign against the closure of the public call boxes in rural areas. It is clear that after the meeting with OFCOM quite a number of concerns were taken on board and written into the report. Tabled as 'C'.

Finally, a campaign to get more Members on board had been stepped up – Suffolk County Council are interested!!

Richard Kemp

19 September 2005

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM: Councillor Richard Kemp**

**REPORT NUMBER    **E****

**TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**DATE OF MEETING    10 November 2005**

**RURAL COMMISSION MEETING : 13 SEPTEMBER 2005**

**1.    Session 1 : Dealt with Neighbourhoods Devolution and Political Leadership**

**1.1   Paul Downie from ODPM**

This Government representative told us (yet again!) of the new strengths to be given to Neighbourhood governance. About re-engaging citizens. We should build upon our existing arrangements involving locally elected councillors. “New Mini Mayors” was quoted – all underpinned by a National Charter, to allow us to apply for ASBO’s, levy fixed penalty tickets, model byelaws, delegated budgets. Neighbourhood advocates each with a pot of money. Response from the delegates was that it appeared most of this was already being tried and Mr Downie had failed to do his homework for this presentation.

**1.2   Norman Dingemans – Leader of Arun District Council**

Mr Dingemans told us of their “special” situation. They have countless liaison panels, powers having been devolved down from Districts and County for minor road repairs etc. Public involved with all of this – more consultation on the areas of spending with the public.

**1.3   Trevor Leggo – Arundel Town Clerk**

Regular meetings, quarterly with Police Chiefs. All size of Parish have equal voice. Setting up numerous Area Panels and Committees.

**2.    Session 2 : LGA Regeneration Board – Priorities and Links to the Rural Agenda**

**2.1   Councillor Chris White – Chair of the Board**

The Board covers Economic Development, Tourism and Culture. They work with RDA’s, Arts Council, DTI and DCMS. They hold a Tourism Forum twice a year. They concentrate on building up the profiles of Councils, increase the funding to Councils and improve the relationship with regional bodies. Main priorities coming up – Olympics 2012, promoting local prosperity and funding and delivery.

**2.2   Councillor Shona Johnstone – Cambridgeshire City Council : Improving the reputation of Local Government**

Spoke of Environmental Member Champions, promoting the whole environmental approach. LSPs are key partners. In Cambridge they are removing street clutter, improving highways and

improving partnership working. They have presided over the Market Towns initiative at Ely, Wisbech, Chatteris, March and Whittlesey. All 40% funded by EEDA.

### 3. **Workshop**

#### 3.1 **Tackling rural within Local Area Agreements (LAAs)**

- What are they the solution to?
- What are they for?
- Challenges?
- Vision – reality – accountability

LAAs – 3 year agreement between localities – LSP, PCT, Police etc.

Achieving across targets round 4 blocks flexible means to an end.

1. Have a vigorous approach with Government.
2. Joined up local services.
3. Pool local resources.
4. Reflect local needs and priorities.

First one was on 20 March 2005, further 66 to be announced – evaluation underway on the first 20.

In somewhere like Blackburn, 28% of public money is spent by local government, the remainder by other public bodies. LAAs would alleviate some of the extreme aspects.

Richard Kemp

19 September 2005

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM: Councillor Richard Kemp**

**REPORT NUMBER    **E****

**TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**DATE OF MEETING    10 November 2005**

**ANNUAL RURAL CONFERENCE MEETING : 14 SEPTEMBER 2005**

**1.    The new Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity, Jim Knight MP, addressed the Conference**

Speaking about incomes, Mr Knight said that the national average income was higher overall in rural areas compared to urban areas. Rural communities face change through CAP reform. Highest on the agenda for problems is Affordable Housing, at present an inquiry was looking into why the current policies were not working. Planning must work with the housing providers to ensure that targets are reached. More money will be available to RDAs to encourage business growth in rural areas. Support for rural Post Offices and transport facilities had been assisted by the Government. It was essential that more power was transferred away from central government to local Councils (I've heard it all before!!) Bio fuel policy was to be pushed hard by the Government. No real answer to retrospective permissions for traveller's sites!!

**2.    Funding Rural Futures – Tony Travers, LSE**

The annual debate on the Balance of Funding Reviews – the outcome is likely to be reduction of public expenditure for 2006/07. Biggest problem is to balance the demands of Housing, as Council Tax increases worry Government. Likely to be some smaller yield taxes, i.e. Tourist Taxes, Education funding review likely to see it ringfenced or removed from local authority a possibility.

Slow down will mean pressure on local budgets. Local authority budgets also face increasing population levels.

Spending review 2007 will signal the time after Tony Blair. Draft of population from urban to rural areas builds up pressures. Urban areas always well funded, they frighten politicians!!

Densities of housing bound to keep increasing.

**Rural Resource Needs**

1. To cope with growing population.
2. To enhance lower funded services.
3. To protect the environment.
4. Rural Regeneration.
5. To meet Government targets, i.e. £90 from Government for £110 expenditure.

**The Future**

- (a) The Lyons inquiry unlikely to change much.

- (b) Funding transfers.
- (c) Rural areas equalisation.
- (d) Need for rural self determination.
- (e) Need to formalise angle on finance issues.

### Afternoon Programme

Included sustainable communities with Dr Stuart Burgess, Chairman, Countryside Agency.

Various workshops:

- Delivering Affordable Housing
- Better Public Transport
- Tackling Rural Disadvantage
- Planning to help regenerate rural areas

Richard Kemp

19 September 2005

H:\DOCS\Committee\REPORTS\Strategy\2005\101105.AnnualRuralConferenceMtg.140905.doc

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM: MR P JONES**

**TO: STRATEGY**

**DATE OF MEETING 10 November 2005**

**EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

The most significant event since the AGM has been the launch of EERA's Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS). This took place on 14<sup>th</sup> October in Cambridge.

I am enclosing a copy of the Chief Executive's (Brian Stewart) Powerpoint presentation and also that of Nick Burfield, Head of Scrutiny and Partnerships.

A copy of the IRS document will be in the Members' Room shortly.

I participated in a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> October at GO-East in Cambridge between David Miliband, Local Government Minister, and EERA Group Leaders. There was no fixed agenda, and a great deal of open discussion took place. Perhaps the most important point made by EERA was that the Eastern Region is very much a rural, not urban area. The meeting was a private one, so full details cannot be given.

A copy of the latest EERA Bulletin is also enclosed.

**CONTACT: Linda Sheppard**

**DIRECT LINE: 01473 826610**