

6 Monthly Update: Flourishing Rural Communities

ITEM 06(a)

RSB Recommendation	<i>emda</i> Response	Proposed Action	By (Date)	Progress to May 2008
<p>Recommendation 1 <i>emda</i> are invited to further develop the enhanced rural evidence base through a collaborative, planned approach to commissioning, managing and sharing research that promotes a greater spatial understanding of the regional economy. This approach would support partnership working, <i>emda</i>'s responsibilities for rural policy (both current and future) and promote a wider understanding of the role of rural productivity. It should include:</p> <p>a) Commissioning new research to examine the economic interactions between urban settlements and their rural hinterlands.</p> <p>b) In partnership with partners, examine the potential to set up a group or mechanism dedicated to encouraging collaboration on rural research and a single point of access to rural data within the region, potentially hosted by Intelligence East Midlands.</p>	<p>1a) <i>emda</i> endorses the spirit of this recommendation but would like to emphasise that the Rural Evidence Base is much wider than the stand alone publication (the Rural East Midlands in 2007) and includes a number of <i>emda</i> commissioned studies on commuting and migration and a range of the policy papers commissioned to inform the development of the RES including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in the Countryside: Raising Economic Wellbeing Through Targeted Intervention • City Regions and Polycentricity: the East Midlands urban network • Mapping deprivation in the East Midlands: implications for policy • Mapping the Structure of Regional Economies <p>1b) IEM already exist to encourage collaboration in research and seek to act as a single point of access for data sharing (although they are not specifically rurally focussed). <i>emda</i> does not feel it is appropriate at this time to consider establishing a stand alone unit in the East Midlands to undertake this function. The soon to be established ESRC/CLG/BERR funded Spatial Economy Research Unit and the National Rural Evidence Hub (hosted by Birkbeck College) address many of the research areas highlighted in this scrutiny review. Establishing a unit in the East Midlands may lead to unnecessary duplication. <i>emda</i> therefore proposes reviewing this recommendation when we have a clear view on the role and function of this new Unit, alongside the existing National Rural Evidence Hub.</p>	<p>1a) The Sub National Review gave RDAs responsibility for leading the development of Single Integrated Regional Strategies. To allow <i>emda</i> to discharge this new responsibility <i>emda</i> will work with partners to undertake a comprehensive review of our Evidence Base. The findings of this will shape the content of a new SIRS Evidence Base.</p> <p>1b) <i>emda</i> and partners (through EMRAF) to discuss and assess the feasibility of this recommendation following the establishment of the National Spatial Economy Research Unit.</p>	<p>Subject to publication of the SNR Implementation Plan</p> <p>By December 2008</p>	<p>1a) <i>emda</i> has updated <u>The Rural East Midlands in 2008</u> and will be publishing this in the summer. This builds on the summary produced in 2007 which accompanies the <u>Rural Action Plan</u>. This will feed into the update of the Regional Evidence Base which will be updated over the next 6 to 8 months with a potential view to providing a RES refresh in 2009.</p> <p>1b) <i>emda</i> currently stands by its initial response to the recommendation.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 2 In order to effectively work towards making rural areas more sustainable and economically productive through an integrated approach to managing development, <i>emda</i> and partners are invited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Assess the region's rural spatial assets and market opportunities. b) Build on recent studies of the nature and economic dynamics of migrant labour in the region to develop policies to promote its contribution to regional productivity. c) Build on their current work investigating atypical employment patterns to consider the economic implications and potential of rural home-working. 	<p>Whilst <i>emda</i> welcomes the suggestions provided we would like to assess these within the context of a more comprehensive review of our evidence base requirements.</p> <p>Furthermore, it may be more appropriate for the National Spatial Economy Research Unit to undertake studies into these areas.</p>	<p>As noted in recommendation 1a <i>emda</i> will be undertaking a comprehensive review of our Evidence Bases, including the Rural Evidence Base. As part of this review process we will consider, in conjunction with our rural partners, the suggestions put forward in recommendations 2a, 2b and 2c.</p> <p>In addition <i>emda</i> will put these forward as suggested areas of investigation for the National Spatial Economy Research Unit.</p> <p>Development work regarding 2b has commenced. Productivity & community cohesion aspects will be addressed in conjunction with sub-regional & local partners in most impacted areas, both urban & rural.</p>	<p>Subject to publication of the SNR Implementation Plan</p> <p>By October 2008</p>	<p>2a) The Head of Strategy and regional Affairs has met with the Director of the National Spatial Economy Research Unit, and has identified relevant areas of policy interest, in order to develop a comprehensive evidence base to inform future policy making in the region.</p> <p>2b) In February 2007 a paper was taken to the <i>emda</i> Board which summarised the findings of the research undertaken by the Institute of Employment Research on the impacts of migrant labour on regional output and employment. Recommendations had key relevance to the work of the esp partnership, and resulted in the alignment of future esp activities regarding migrants to the Achieving Productivity theme of the RES - recognising that migrant workers are overwhelmingly in employment, but may be highly skilled whilst currently working in low skill jobs. Policy development within <i>emda</i> and through the esp is therefore focusing on potential interventions to better utilise the skills of such individuals.</p> <p>2c) A report was commissioned from Experian (in September 2007) which investigated atypical employment. This explores several models for rural home-working and the implications of these; it notes that while there are economic, environmental and social advantages to be gained, there are also obstacles and further study may be necessary.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 3 To overcome market failures & deliver against the targets in the RES and Rural Action Plan, using the intelligence and analysis gathered through the review of the spatial dynamics of the regional economy and the market assessment of the region's rural spatial assets, <i>emda</i> and partners are invited to:</p> <p>a) Within the context of LAA and SSP responsibilities, consider how to further develop the integrated and area-based approach to overcoming multiple market failures in deprived remote rural areas.</p> <p>b) Develop a programme to build community capacity in the countryside in partnership with Local Authorities by supporting the development of parish and small town councils and/or key voluntary and community sector bodies.</p> <p>And assess the potential for developing:</p> <p>c) 'Blueprint' to deliver more regeneration in rural areas.</p> <p>d) An approach to the development of market towns as economic motors for the regeneration of rural areas by further stimulating business growth.</p> <p>e) An approach to the development of social enterprises as a means of overcoming market failure in areas suffering from the loss of key private sector investment in basic services, for example, shops, pubs, post offices, school meals.</p>	<p><i>emda</i> accepts this recommendation with some qualifications, reflected in the proposed actions for recommendations 3b and 3c.</p>	<p><i>emda</i> is committed to the wellbeing of the region's rural communities. In that context, it will look to support existing, and nurture new, businesses which contribute to the rural and regional economy and local service provision.</p> <p>a) <i>emda</i> will continue to work with SSPs and other local partners to address problems arising from market failure. The RDA is actively reviewing its involvement in the LAA and LSP processes.</p> <p>b) Although <i>emda</i> will play a support role in developmental work for the parish tier of local government, it recognises that there are other agencies who will properly lead on this work. With regard to the third sector, <i>emda</i> is leading on the development of the third sector platform, which will fully incorporate rural aspects.</p> <p>c) <i>emda</i> will consider, with regional & sub-regional partners, the most appropriate delivery mechanism for regeneration in rural areas.</p> <p>d) <i>emda</i> is already actively</p>	<p>Subject to publication of the SNR Implementation Plan.</p>	<p>3a) <i>emda</i> is in liaison at director level with every LAA in the region; we will encourage partnerships to ensure that the needs of rural areas are adequately addressed, on the basis of our legal obligations to rural areas. We will also have regard to this obligation when choosing post-SNR local delivery partners.</p> <p>3b) The East Midlands single platform for the 3rd sector came into existence from October 2007 and is currently developing its plans and structure. Achieving full geographic coverage of the region, including rural areas, will be part of its task.</p> <p>3c) We expect the SNR to result ultimately in improved delivery of economic development tailored to specifically local needs.</p> <p>3d) Discussions are actively underway and funding allocated to the further development of BIDS work in the region.</p> <p>3e) Engagement with business services regarding Post Office closures, including the potential for social enterprise solutions, demonstrates rural proofing of the regional business support offer.</p>

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		<p>involved in promoting the development of market towns and will continue to do so, including through the EM Market Towns Asset School (EMMTAS) and the BIDs mechanism, the application of which to market towns is demonstrated by the recent vote in Sleaford and progress on implementation of the BIDs.</p> <p>e) <i>emda</i> is already active in nurturing the third sector and social enterprises, including through its leading role in developing the third sector platform and its asset development work. It will ensure that this work is adequately 'rural proofed', through appropriate representation and by ongoing close working between relevant teams.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 4 <i>emda</i> are invited to lead the process of developing an enhanced approach to ensuring that regional policy is designed, implemented and monitored with sensitivity to its impact on rural areas of the region and that such rural sensitivity is built into arrangements for managing funding devolved to other bodies</p>	<p><i>emda</i> accepts this recommendation.</p>	<p>This 'mainstreaming' of rural policy, which this scrutiny ascertained has widespread support, implies the need to ensure that all aspects of <i>emda's</i> policies and programmes take into account, or have complementary elements with, the needs and interests of rural areas. All staff working on strategic priorities in</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p><i>emda</i> is fully committed to mainstreaming rural. We have continued to strengthen the rural context of the Corporate Plan in discussion with BERR and other departments.</p> <p>A rural proofing framework is in the process of being formalised, due to be in place by October 2008.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 6 Key partners such as <i>emda</i>, EMRA, GO-EM and Local Authorities should continue to influence rural policy at national and EU levels by promoting a greater awareness and understanding of the needs, problems and opportunities of the region.</p>	<p><i>emda</i> accepts this recommendation</p>	<p><i>emda</i> is already taking every appropriate opportunity and will continue to do so. This includes active involvement with the RDAs' Rural Affairs Network, through our support for and management of the East Midlands European Office, the raising of rural issues by RDA Chairs in their meetings with Ministers, and through our management of elements of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, via the RDPE. We shall also be participating in the forthcoming 'Health Check' of the CAP in 2008.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Head of Rural & Communities has met the Head of the EMEO to determine rural issues and priorities in which <i>emda</i> and EMEO are to be involved. This to include the CAP Healthcheck during 2008, and the progress of the RDPE. The latter may include a visit to Brussels to brief EU officials directly.</p> <p><i>emda</i> is the lead RDA on European affairs and takes the Chair of Chairs role later in 2008. This will present opportunities to ensure that the profile and exposure of rural issues remains high.</p>