

**'A Breath of Fresh Air' – Launch Event of the  
Rural Research and Strategy Partnership  
(RRSP)**

Held on the 24th April 2008 in London

**Summary of Proceedings**



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## 2. Executive Summary

### 2.1 Introduction

Rural Research & Strategic Partnership is a new initiative aiming to address rural issues in the South East by bringing the research community closer to rural policy makers and delivery organisations.

The purpose of the launch event was two fold:

- 1) To inform a wide range of stakeholders about the RRSP and set out for them how they might interact with it and the researchers involved;
- 2) To gather information from the stakeholders on the most pressing current rural research priorities.

Throughout the event the founding Partners stressed the importance of hearing, from the groups charged with rural delivery, where the evidence gaps currently exist and how the research community can best assist the delivery of creative solutions to practical rural problems.

The RRSP offers rural practitioners an additional route to access the considerable breath of research available through the Universities of Reading, Surrey and Sussex, through the University College for the Creative Arts and through Forest Research, the research agency of the Forestry Commission.

There are excellent researchers in these and other research institutions, working on the important issues of the day, but who don't necessarily work sufficiently on rural issues. RRSP aims to assist these researchers to combine forces on new collaborative projects and to leverage existing research funding streams for the benefit of the rural sector. The RRSP believes that its partners' collective research skills and networks are actually capable of tackling research to assist the solution of virtually any rural problem, not just those pertaining to the traditional land based disciplines.

Many of the problematic topics are, of course, shared by both rural and urban areas. It is noted that SEEDA intends to set up a new Sustainability Institute in Dartford/Thames Gateway. This institute will obviously have a substantial focus on 'urban' challenges. However, it has been suggested that RRSP can play a role as the Institute's rural network and, in that way, ensure that the challenges on rural sustainability in the South East receive the necessary attention.

To help found the Partnership, SEEDA has awarded RRSP a three-year grant, which funds a part-time Partnership Co-ordination post. RRSP intends to act as a broker, which 'glues' existing networks together and



adds value to them, rather than forming a new standalone grouping of researchers. There are many ways in which RRSP can work and part of the purpose of the event was to identify which would be the most productive approaches to take.

The event was structured into three sessions, the first two being dedicated to the key speakers. The final session comprised an interactive workshop exercise, entitled 'World Café'. This activity enabled the participants to engage with each other and to develop a series of debates by addressing three predetermined questions, which were as follows:

**Question 1-** What are the most important rural issues that you are dealing with?

**Question 2-** Reflecting on the issues that were identified in the first discussion - what don't we know that we really need to know to make progress on these issues?

**Question 3-** What role should the RRSP play in helping to address these needs?

A transcript of this session is provided in Appendix 1 of this document.

The launch event's agenda and presentation slides have been published on Forest Research's website: <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/rrsp>



## 2.2 The rural challenges facing the South East – Summarising the speakers' presentations

### Session 1: Setting the Scene – Rural Issues in the South East

#### 2.2.1 Dr Stuart Burgess: The national picture

Dr Stuart Burgess, Chairman of the Commission for Rural Communities and the Government's Rural Advocate, set out what he saw as the most pressing national issues for the rural sector.

The Commission for Rural Communities has three roles, all centred around addressing rural disadvantage, namely:

- Rural advocacy;
- producing a research based evidence (such as the 'State of the Countryside' report in June/July);
- a watchdog role, which makes sure that government decisions and policies are seen through a rural lens;

Stuart gave a broad outline of the upcoming CRC report, 'the future of rural economies'. This is to be launched in the next few weeks and proposes ways of addressing rural disadvantage through leadership; investment; innovation; and the empowerment of local communities.

Furthermore, he pointed to the concern that disadvantage affects some 2.5 million English people in over 920K rural households, which are a widely disparate group of people. The key fact is that their dispersed nature makes problems difficult to address.

Stuart pinpointed four key areas needing national attention. Top of the list for action is Affordable Rural Housing. Another big issue is food and farming – with specific questions around food security and specific groups, such as hill farming. Stuart also called for a broad national debate on the use and allocation of land. Not least, rural service provision is also critically important and Stuart challenged all present to seize and develop the many creative ideas emerging on this topic.

#### 2.2.2 Phil Eadie: The Rural South - A recent snapshot

Phil Eadie, Head of SEE-IN, the South East England Intelligence Network, provided an introduction to the group, its purpose and aim.

SEE-IN tries to promote access to data and the increased use of evidence based policy making. Phil highlighted the need for research evidence and the importance of data-sharing between national, regional and local partners, in order to avoid duplication of research and analysis.



As a key point, Phil pointed to a lack of qualitative and explanatory information and identified a particular problem with the accessing of environmental data.

More details about SEE-IN and how to access the data hub can be found online: [www.see-in.co.uk](http://www.see-in.co.uk).

### **2.2.3 Valerie Carter: Rural Challenges facing the South East**

Valerie Carter, Rural Director for SEEDA, outlined the challenges facing the South East Rural Economy and provided ideas for potential solutions.

Valerie first provided valuable baseline information about the rural sector and in particular, referred to the Regional Economic Strategy's (RES) rural priorities, which include:

- More economically dynamic and socially inclusive villages and towns;
- Increased business competitiveness in rural areas through entrepreneurship and enterprise;
- Dynamic food, farming and forestry sectors, enhancing and exploiting the countryside's assets and with increased adaptability and resilience;
- Increased value of premium local products from land-based industries with effective supply chains;
- The quality and biodiversity of the landscape preserved and enhanced; providing a high quality life-style offer to those who work, live in and visit it.

#### Rural Economy

She emphasised the importance of the rural sector for the South East's economy, with rural tourism alone contributing over £2.3 billion [GVA] per annum. The GVA for the whole region had increased from £144 Billion in 2003 to an estimated £162 Billion in 2007.

Valerie pointed out that there were more than 100,000 businesses in the rural areas, but only approximately 25, 000 farms. Therefore, there were 75, 000 other types of rural businesses, of which we didn't know the exact contribution to the GVA of the region. National evidence suggested that these were small businesses, resilient to change and that they had a higher proportion of self employed. Furthermore, these were made up of all the types of businesses found in urban areas, which suggested that the urban and rural business profiles were not very different.

#### Land-based Business

It was further noted that although the land-based sector did not contribute a large percentage to the region's GVA, it did manage one of its



most precious environmental assets. Landscape had to be seen as an economic asset where people wanted to live; base their businesses and which attracted millions of visitors. Land management was therefore seen as critical and it was mentioned that land was mainly managed and maintained by farmers with 70% of the region's land managed by farming and 60% being under commercial farming.

Valerie commented that the land-based challenge was to raise the low rate of GVA increase for farming, forestry and fishing. She added that landscape was not just a green environment, but should be a productive one. Some specific, key challenges with regard to sustainable resources were identified as:

- Wheat prices;
- Bio-fuels versus food;
- Climate change impacts;
- Water (too much or not enough); and
- Rise in exotic disease.

#### Farming Business

Valerie then commented on farming businesses and stressed that farmers needed to diversify in order to have more stable incomes. SEEDA had developed a series of sector champions from different land-based sectors in order to develop ideas for the future direction of their industry. Furthermore, farmers had been supported through the original European programme ERDP to get more value added through development along supply chains. Valerie noted, however, that there were serious gaps in these supply chains and more needed to be done to address this problem.

She further pointed to the opportunities of using universities and research to develop new products and that the sector needed to work more closely with the Non-Food Crops Centre in York.

Valerie identified the following farming challenges:

- Exploit new support regimes;
- More collaborative ventures;
- Exploiting market opportunities;
- Establish demand as well as manage supply;
- Effective use of RDPE;
- Supported by skills development.

#### Food Businesses

It was noted that a wide variety of foods were produced in the region and that there were a series of local food networks, supported by SEEDA and local authorities (more than 400 companies). Gaps in the food chain had



been identified; for instance, research by SEEDA had highlighted the lack of abattoirs and cutting plants in the parts of the region.

Valerie presented two SEEDA-supported food projects:

1. A public procurement initiative, involving a partnership of fishermen and a public procurement officer who designed a fish cake to go into school dinners. SEEDA supported the development of a new machine to produce the fish cake and the outcome was that 6, 500 per week were going into school dinners in Hampshire and West Sussex;
2. Delivering a London Food Strategy, working with the London Development Agency, EEDA and London wholesale markets (Covent Garden Market specifically). A project officer was supported to enable more South East Foods to go through Covent Garden market.

The following Food challenges were noted:

- High dependence on seasonal labour;
- Better integration along the food chain;
- Regional produce into supermarkets;
- Better use of local outlets and London;
- Real gaps in food chain;
- More public procurement;
- Effective flexibility of RDPE.

### Forestry Business

Valerie stated that the South East had the four most wooded counties in the UK, with more than 10, 000 woodland owners and a lot of woodlands on farms. A very large amount of these woods were under-managed and there had been a loss of the original coppice markets. She added that woods were valued for recreational purposes, however that they also offered wood-fuel opportunities. SEEDA had supported biomass boilers in some of its projects and also has wood-fuel development programmes with the Forestry Commission. She further mentioned a pilot project for using wood in sustainable construction (New Forest for commoners housing).

The key challenges for the forestry business included:

- Establish a market for wood fuels;
- Establish necessary supply networks and supply chain infrastructure;
- Do we have the right skills available?
- How can we use more of the regions assets productively?





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### Rural Communities

Valerie talked about SEEDA's rural communities' programme (matched by local authorities), which has the objectives of improving local business potential, promoting local business networks and provide outreach training facilities.

She mentioned that SEEDA also supported a regional small towns partnership, which aims to improve the role of small towns in becoming more effective capitals for their rural hinterlands. Furthermore, these towns would become more sustainable in offering homes, improved jobs and services and have a better ecological footprint.

Valerie identified the following challenges for rural communities:

- Commuting and dormitory towns;
- High unaffordable house prices – driving out young people and families;
- Supermarket dominance;
- How do we help excluded groups?
- How do we help people change their behaviours?

### Mainstream Activity

Valerie pointed out that business support in the region already existed through a single access point – Business Link. The rural remit would be considered as part of a simplification process. Furthermore, it was noted that the manufacturing advisory service had many rural clients and that Tourism South East was supporting tourism across the whole region. The Regional Skills Alliance and Sector Skills Council were all part of the mainstream activity. She further stated that the RDPE would certainly help with specific skills' development in the land-based sector.

It was stated that the SEEDA Enterprise and Gateway programme delivered in both urban and rural areas and that the proposed new Innovation Teams (Regional Economic Strategy) would seek to have a rural remit. Moreover, the new LAA process would try and embed delivery of services in rural areas.

Key challenges for mainstream activity:

- Do we need to do more?
- How is community development to be supported?
- Will LAAs be enabled to deliver a real rural dimension to their service delivery?



In conclusion, Valerie raised the following questions:

- Do we know the future impacts of global markets?
- Are we prepared to cope with real but unknown changes?
- Are we prepared for invasion of more animal diseases?
- Is our resilience planning robust?
- Do we know the impact on the livestock industry and how can we help cope with that?
- We know there are gaps in infrastructure and supply chains that need to be filled to take many of our industry sectors forward;
- Is the new RDPE too rigid to help us do this?
- What will the South East look like in the future?
- What will it feel like to those who live and work there?
- Will it attract visitors who spend?

#### 2.2.4 Session 1 Questions & Answers

Following-on from the presentations, the speakers were invited to form a panel to answer questions from the audience. The session raised the following issues:

##### **Q: Where does culture sit within rural?**

The panel stressed that the term culture had to be appropriately defined and that there was more to culture than 'historic' culture in its traditional sense. Valerie Carter pointed out that the 'products' in terms of the South East's tourism were not just about iconic places, but a whole range of smaller, 'ordinary' rural towns. Stuart Burgess agreed with this statement and added that there appeared to be a trend for more people to visit rural market towns than the countryside and that access to these towns had to be improved.

Furthermore, Valerie suggested that visitors to these places needed to be encouraged to explore the surrounding areas and that subtle differences in marketing approaches addressing this issue could add a lot of value to the sector. The short break market, day visitors from London, for instance, were seen as another major opportunity for the region and that links to long distance cycle paths, e.g. a Thames path, could provide opportunities.

Valerie further stressed that lessons could be learnt from how Europe markets its food and cultural heritage. For example, progress was being made in developing food festivals across the region, but that other types of festivals, e.g. music festivals, were also developing and needed a more co-ordinated approach.

Finally, Phil Eadie concluded that the SE Cultural Observatory was working hard to encourage exploration of what the region had to offer.



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**Q: How to deal with the competing pressures on land?**

Valerie Carter referred to the South East's landscape diversity and stressed the importance for rural diversification and securing of landscape quality. She stressed that when applications for changes in land-use were made, it was essential to consider environmental and social impacts as well as economic ones.

The increasingly competing pressures on land were noted and the fact that landscapes were not static and would continue to evolve. Stuart Burgess further added that the view on food security had changed. Whereas only a few years ago, the topic had not been considered as important, the government had now acknowledged its significance. He noted that land and its uses would become a more precious commodity and that societies could be facing difficult times. He pointed to the African experience and noted that the UK had absolutely no understanding of what life was like with food shortages. In his view, the 'fixed view' on GM crops would have to be revisited.

'Scenario mapping' of regions was seen as a useful process, but the point was made that the next 5-10 years were the critical time horizon, rather than 20-30 years.

Valerie agreed with the importance of scenario planning and referred to the example of changing eating habits in Asia where an increase in meat consumption was expected. She raised the question whether the livestock industry in the Western World would be able to cope with these changing demands and how we would be able to address these. Would this issue, for example, require a debate about vegetarianism or changing eating habits by moving to high quality meat consumption once per week as a cultural norm?

**Q: Will there be opportunities to build an economic base for rural housing enablers?**

Stuart Burgess addressed this issue and pointed to the problem of financial cut-backs. He noted that were now seven lean years ahead and that the CLG was the only glimmer of hope for a centrally funded solution. It was agreed that the need for affordable housing needed to be addressed, however that this may not necessarily be in the form of rural housing enablers.

**Comment:** One of the delegates commented on the importance of ensuring a link between national and other regional actions. He noted that as an example, developing metrics for health was important, but that there simply wasn't a research base to demonstrate the health benefits that accrue from access to the natural environment. The national discussion for health had to be brought to the rural level. It was



suggested that the access to environmental data was difficult and that there needed to be a strong evidence base. Gathering of data was seen as an important start, but that a true joint and shared understanding of the data had to be developed. It was stated that we shouldn't mix up data gathering with evidence.

Stuart Burgess added that there was a lot of good rural research taking place, for instance at Reading University. Furthermore, some of new Universities, such as the Rural Academies at Cumbria and Lincolnshire were becoming more active. The question was as to what was the best way to bring these research bases together and what the RRSP could do differently?

Valerie Carter agreed and stated that research had tended to stay within its various silos. This partnership had been funded precisely for developing a better way of working. It was hoped to develop a real intelligence base.

Session 2: Launch of the Rural Research Strategy Partnership

**2.2.5 Ed Metcalfe: RRSP- Leveraging the South East knowledge base for rural purposes.**

Ed Metcalfe, Chief Scientist and Head of Innovation, SEEDA, presented the opportunities and pathways for developing a strong knowledge base for rural purposes in the South East, thereby fostering the region's economic strategy targets.

In particular, he drew attention to the importance of building new collaborations for innovation and the development of new enterprise and entrepreneurship in rural areas. Within this, the enabling of collaboration between businesses and the academic community was seen as the key to the development of new products and services.

One of SEEDA's key drivers in facilitating new collaborative work in the South East, will be the Kent Thameside Institute for Sustainability (KT IfS) – a new centre for excellence, enabling collaborative working and research to develop, test and demonstrate solutions for Integrated Management of Resources for Communities and Districts. With regard to rural opportunities in this development, Ed indicated the importance of rural-urban interfaces, the need for future-proofing, as well as the key topics of waste, energy and water.

The IfS's first innovation platform to be target will focus on low impact housing. Potential future innovation platforms may include sustainable agri-food supply chains, potable water and waste management.



### 2.2.6 Anja Ueberjahn-Tritta: Introducing the work of the RRSP

Anja Ueberjahn-Tritta, the RRSP partnership co-ordinator, provided an introduction to the work and the function of the newly founded partnership.

She reiterated the point made in Valerie's talk that the rural sector was changing and that these changes brought new challenges and opportunities. With regard to the South East in particular, it was indicated that almost 80% of the land was classified as rural and one third of its countryside was protected for its landscape quality. Anja noted that despite of these circumstances and despite of the fact that the South East had a high density of tertiary education and research establishments, there hadn't been a rural research network of this kind in the region. It was therefore the aim of the partnership to fill this gap and to provide the innovative solutions that the region's rural sector needed.

Anja then addressed the function of the RRSP and explained that the partnership would essentially act as a broker by bringing together the stakeholders, as the problem-owners, and the research community (the potential problem solvers); thereby aiming to deliver the right information to the right people, at the right time.

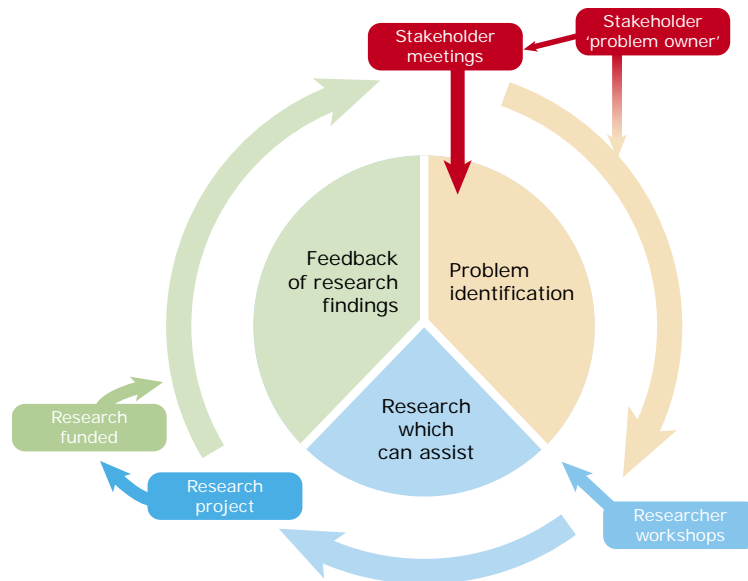
Moreover, Anja described the partnership process (Figure 1). This identified the stakeholders as the key information holders and starting point for the process, by informing the RRSP and the researchers about the problems the sector was facing. This information was then to be fed to the research community, for example, through the use of research workshops, where the scoping of potential research projects would take place. The partnership would also be involved in working with researchers to identify funding sources and the preparation of funding bids. Once the funding was secured and the research undertaken, the output would be fed back to the stakeholders where it would inform decision-making and thereby completing the circle.

It was emphasised that the partnership was specifically aiming at identifying innovative collaborations and involving researchers from wide-ranging disciplines, including some that traditionally had not been associated with the rural sector. Examples of such disciplines included Management, Electronic Engineering, Linguistics and Environmental Psychology.

Anja then addressed the delegates and invited them to become involved in the partnership and to show their support. On a final note, she stressed the economic potential and importance for the South East, as an 'economic powerhouse' to pioneer the way of addressing rural issues and offering solutions to problems that could potentially be of value world-wide.



Figure 1: How the partnership will work



### 2.2.7 Session 2 Questions and Answers

The Founding Partners and Ed Metcalfe were then invited to form a panel to answer questions from the audience.

#### **Q: Public perception of science – how can we maximise public engagement through the partnership?**

Stephen Nortcliff noted that communication between researchers and policy makers had traditionally tended to focus on the dissemination of the research findings arising from a piece of research. There was often relatively little attention given to interpreting these results into the context of policy-making. It was relatively uncommon for scientists to receive information from those policymakers who were addressing these problems on a day to day basis. Bringing researchers and policy makers together on a regular basis, to discuss the problems and possible solutions should result in both a better understanding of the nature of the problems and of the science which might be applied to address them. The RRSP would provide a better way of communication by creating a cycling process and that there was a vision to give as well as receive.

Ed Metcalfe added that listening was important. Scientists had to start listening (e.g. through community programmes). He noted that it was important to capture creativity, solve problems together and bring the message across that science was important.

**Comment:** One of the delegates commented that the partnership had a timely launch and there was a need to build on present research. There was a good opportunity to identify expertise and support collaboration



that already existed. It was further noted that there could already be well established networks and that we shouldn't forget that many graduates open new successful rural businesses that are aimed to achieve high growth and low impact, particularly in the design and craft sector. It was suggested that potentials could be realised by looking more closely at the subject areas that have that dynamic element.

Peter Bunyan commented that rural and urban sectors were not that much different in their job composition and that the difference mainly lay in the density. He added that the business sector was a big challenge and that the RRSP would have to address good practice. Uwe Derksen further made the point that collaborations allowed the tapping into knowledge base, by looking at the same issues from different angles and perspectives.

**Q: Could RRSP come up with models for sustainable communities?**

Ed Metcalfe was positive that identifying of definitions was possible.

Sharon Philips added that the partnership needed to hear what people had to say and that the partners hadn't come with a set of predetermined subjects or projects. She emphasised that the RRSP was keen to hear the thoughts of the stakeholders.

**Q: The issue of sustainability is popular – we are all fishing for funding. What is the partnership's fixed cost per annum? How ambitious are you about your project base research?**

Alison Melvin responded to this question by explaining that a three-year grant from SEEDA had been made available to fund the post of the partnership-coordinator. She added that all of the founding partners were very ambitious to ensure this investment by SEEDA made a difference. The real success of the Partnership would depend on its ability to leverage existing research funding streams for the benefit of the rural sector. There were lots of ways in which the RRSP could work and that part of the purpose of the day's event was to identify which were the most productive approaches to take. Alison stressed that it was very important that the RRSP acted as a broker which 'glued' existing networks together, adding value to existing networks rather than forming a new standalone grouping of researchers. She continued that it was intended to work with a wider number of research bodies and also with other SEEDA clusters and larger initiatives – she remarked that potential links with the 'Sustainability Institute' had already been noted.

Ed Metcalfe added that the RRSP was a networking bid and that it wasn't possible for SEEDA to provide additional large research funding – therefore the partners had to make it happen.



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Peter Bunyan commented that Universities were full-cost organisations and that the partner institutions would put some money on top to keep the process going. He also noted that there were excellent scientists already working with the big research funders but who didn't necessarily worked sufficiently on rural issues. It was suggested that collaboration with these teams would be a possibility.





## 2.3 Stakeholders' research needs and priorities

In her speech, Valerie Carter identified some key rural issues, which form part of the Regional Economic Strategy for the South East. As mentioned in 2.2.3 above, these include:

- Dynamic villages and towns;
- Entrepreneurship and enterprise;
- Increased adaptability and resilience for the food, farming and forestry sector;
- Premium local products with effective supply chains;
- Landscape.

The discussions held as part of the World Café workshops, and the evaluation of feedback sheets, built on these and produced further topics of interest. Some of these relate closely to SEEDA's comprehensive priorities. A summary of the topics is listed in Table 1 below.

<b>Table 1 Rural Topics and delegates expressing particular interest in these topics</b>	
<b>Specific rural topics</b>	Delegates expressing particular interest in specified topic
<b>Dynamic Villages and Towns</b>	
Access	Public (LA)
Rural Tourism	Academia, Charity & Voluntary (e.g. Surrey Countryside Access Forum)
Heritage	Academia
Strategic Partnerships	Public (LA)
Cultural Regeneration + Identity	Academia
Transport	Various
<b>Entrepreneurship and enterprise</b>	
Leadership role of rural entrepreneurs	Cross-sector
Social Enterprise	Public
<b>Food, farming and forestry sectors</b>	
Rural diversification	Academia
Future Land-use + Management	Public (Natural England)
Socio-ecological resilience	Academia
Local Products and Supply Chains	Public (SEEDA)
Environmental capacity	Public (Natural England)
All elements of rural life (co-ordinating the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Rural Affairs Group (economic emphasis))	Public (CC)



<b>Table 1 Rural Topics and delegates expressing particular interest in these topics (cont'd)</b>	
Agriculture	NFU
Development of rural land use based co-operatives involving private/public sector groups	FR
<b>Innovation</b>	
Sustainable Design	Academia
Organisational innovation	Cross-sector
Eco-homes	Public
<b>Landscape</b>	
Understanding Evolution of landscapes (to be able to guide or advise on future change)	Public
Changing landscapes – the place where every rural person lives, works, visits, uses	South East Protected Landscapes
Landscape modification and adaptability to climate change	Royal Botanical Gardens
Plants for appropriate environments	Royal Botanical Gardens
<b>Communities</b>	Public (LA)
People's values, perceptions, expectations	Public (Natural England)
Engagement	Public (LA)
Models for sustainable communities (Managing tension between environmental, economic and social issues) Existing community-led evidence (Parish Plans) Develop economic case for rural affordable housing	Charity & Voluntary (Surrey Community Action)
Mobilising community resources	Cross sector
Community initiatives 'sustainability' Defining 'Community'	Public (ESEP)
Affordability of living in rural areas	All
Rural services	NFU, CRC, SEEDA, LAs
Housing	NFU, CRC, SEEDA, LAs
<b>Rural Data/Evidence/Social Science</b>	
Evidencing masked rural deprivation	Public (LA)
Scattered and isolated deprivation Rural Economies	Public (SEE-IN)



Condition of natural habitats Responding to Climate Change Qualitative social research	
<b>Table 1 Rural Topics and delegates expressing particular interest in these topics (cont'd)</b>	
Knowledge Transfer to practitioners and policy makers	FR
Defining Community	Public
<b>Energy</b>	
Sustainable energy systems	Academia
<b>Governance</b>	
Rural/Urban and National/Local Interfaces	Academia
Planning	
<b>Climate Change</b>	(All - overarching topic)
<b>Sustainability</b>	(All - overarching topic)



## 2.4 Précis

Professor Peter Bunyan, chair of the RRSP, thanked everyone for their active participation throughout the day and concluded the afternoon with a summary of the key points and outcomes from the day's proceedings.

He noted that the rural stakeholders were facing a multitude of problematic topics, some of which the rural areas shared with the urban regions and others that were peculiar to the rural areas. Yet despite of this diversity, all of these topics could be summed up in one topical word: 'Sustainability'.

Peter referred to Bruce Alberts (editor of 'Science') who had addressed the question of how we could make a science out of sustainable development. His answer had been:

*'Developing a sound platform of knowledge to address this critical issue will require harnessing research of the highest quality, both in the natural and social sciences. And for this research to be effective, scientists will need to develop much deeper connections with the rest of society.'*

Peter stressed that this was precisely what the RRSP wanted to achieve.

Subsequently, Peter recapped on what the RRSP had already done and what the partnership's next steps were going to be:

### The RRSP so far:

- Assembled a group of partner institutions whose collective research skills are capable of tackling research to assist the solution of virtually any rural problem;
- Persuaded SEEDA to fund a co-ordinator;
- Begun (with the launch event) to draw in the rest of the rural society.

### The next steps:

- Involve researchers and hold a series of meetings between those researchers who are interested in order to define projects around the problems (the stakeholders) and others have outlined;
- Bring together teams from a wide variety of disciplines from different institutes; and in doing so, developing best practice;
- Square the circle between the aspirations of the rural stakeholders, the aspirations of the researchers and achieve projects that will attract funding;
- Become self-supporting managerially within the 3-year period of SEEDA funding.



Peter expressed the wish that the rural stakeholders would make time to attend meetings with researchers and give their perspectives and demonstrate their support. He reiterated that it was imperative to demonstrate support and that this should be a major strength of the partnership.

He then addressed the issue of funding and pointed out that there would be opportunities for bids for funding in areas defined by the funders that may be adjacent to but not absolutely aligned to the partnership's objectives. He stressed that the RRSP had to recognise and act on those. He noted that there were already projects underway which were relevant to the RRSP's portfolio. For instance, researchers in the Physics Department at Surrey University have been working with Forest Research on the drying properties of wood and the suitability of the resulting timber for building. Moreover, Engineers from Surrey University have been working with the Building Research Institute on novel building techniques, both of which might be bought together to address affordable well designed homes in the rural areas.

It was emphasised that knowledge transfer of the results of research leading to innovative solutions to rural problems was the partnership's ultimate goal. Peter added that in addition to stimulating new research projects, it was hoped to use both RRSP's results and those of others to produce influential rural policy papers.

Peter further noted that collaboration with other region's university-based organisations, dedicated to aspects of rural affairs, could potentially offer opportunities. As examples, he mentioned the Countryside and Community Research Institute, which is jointly run by Gloucester and West of England Universities and the Exeter University Department of Geography. Furthermore, Nottingham University Rural Research Gateway and Nottingham Trent University's Department of Animal, Rural and Environmental Science; as well as Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy, which administers the RELU (Rural Economic and Land Use) Programme.

Lastly, Peter referred to SEEDA's plans for setting up a new Sustainability Institute in Dartford/Thames Gateway. He pointed out that although this institute may be more 'urban orientated', it had been suggested by SEEDA that the RRSP should be seen as the Institute's rural network. In that way, the rural areas of the South East could receive a proportion of the funding which was expected to come from, among others, the recently formed Technology Strategy Board.



## 2.5 Next steps for the RRSP

### 2.5.1 Stakeholder Steering Group

One of the immediate steps for the RRSP is to select a stakeholder steering group, which will be chaired by Jacinta Thorley, Chief Executive of the South East Rural Community Council.

The purpose of the steering group will be to uphold existing ties and further develop relationships with rural stakeholders. It will guide the partnership by feeding back information on contemporary topics and developments in the rural sector. It is anticipated that the steering group will meet twice a year.

### 2.5.2 Research Database

The identification of research expertise available in the South East region is one of the partnership's key objectives. The gathering and compiling of this information into a database will assist with the matching of compatible research groups and identifying innovative collaborations.

### 2.5.3 Research Funding Opportunities

The partnership will predominantly identify available funding opportunities from traditional funding sources, such as research councils and trusts and will assist researchers in their preparation of funding bids. Collaborations and funding opportunities with private sector organisation will also be explored.

### 2.5.4 Research 'Sandpits'

A number of small-scale research workshops, or 'sandpits' will be run towards the end of the year, involving selected groups of researchers. The sandpits will bring together potentially compatible research groups and will deliberately try to develop new collaborations which stimulate the scoping for new research project ideas and approaches.

### 2.5.5 Communication

The dissemination and sharing of information is one of our priorities. If you would like to receive regular updates on the RRSP's progress and upcoming events, please contact the partnership co-ordinator at:

Forest Research  
Alice Holt Lodge  
Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 4LH  
Tel: 01420 526 194  
Email: [anja.ueberjahn-tritta@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:anja.ueberjahn-tritta@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)



## Appendix 1: Research Café Workshop

The Research Café workshop was structured as follows:

- Three rounds of conversation, each addressing one question;
- Participants move onto another table after each round;
- One person remains as table host;
- A record is kept of the conversation;
- Brief Plenary between rounds to reflect upon emerging issues.

The key points from the table conversations were as follows:

### *Question 1: What are the most important rural issues that you are dealing with?*

Rural Diversity (social, economic, environmental)

There is a rural population which is linked to the land, but many others are based in rural communities and not dependent on the land for their rural context.

Rural/ urban interrelationships are key.

Retaining younger generations – average age increasing and putting pressure on services, Hospitals, Schools, Post Office etc.

Retaining younger generation, to work in non-rural local businesses through;

- intelligent public transport
- communal work/ recreation centres
- social /entertainment reasons to stay in the rural environment.

Engaging non rural-related businesses based in rural areas.

Rural courses in:

- planning and affordable housing
- land use/ management / farming
- climate change

Media representation of...

- farming and agribusiness
- life in the country/ lifestyles
- rural issues.

What might we learn internationally?

What degree of change will be driven by market forces and what degree by our choices for land use?



Need to direct policy considerations to the rural environment.

Finite quality/ quantity of land.

- need to direct debate to Govt
- Fuel v Food
- Change in the RDA success measures, not just GVA

Landscape Management

- how does that relate to the individual units?

State of the regions' woodlands

- lot of woodfuel supply and potential to increase management of woodland, for numerous reasons, not least biodiversity benefits
- need to encourage the demand for timber products and woodfuels.
- Marketing and consistency of supply.

South East's agricultural focus

- Squeeze in land
- Equine focus
- A challenge to maintaining stock-based sustainable farming systems (wood pastures, flood plains, grazing marsh).
- Support biodiversity and conservation through increasing the value of stock-based farming systems e.g. communal anaerobic digestion.

Water Management – service provision from rural areas to urban.

- Climate change
- relation to forestry & agriculture
- Carbon Capture

Delegates' priority topics ranged across energy, community projects, the creative industries and forestry, but all were in some way involved in the challenge of exchanging evidence for policy (and other knowledge). It was strongly agreed that greater clarity about which rural bodies are responsible for what topics and decisions would be very helpful – a lot of energy is lost by people trying to raise a question along the route, especially where community groups try to effect a change in their locality – good ideas are often stymied by the public's difficulty in simply engaging with the public bodies allegedly acting on their behalf.

Delegates felt that adoption of new policies or technologies were often inhibited by a lack of clarity as to what communities were likely to find acceptable. There is a lot of delay and antagonism caused by top-down imposition of certain policies – wind energy was cited as an example of this. An alternative, more constructive approach may be to first explore what water/waste/energy scenarios are most likely to be approved of by communities before specific projects are proposed. This also echoed in attempt to develop affordable housing for older people, parishes had identified sites which were then defeated by nimbyism. Nimbyism felt to





be greatest where there is a mismatch between prescriptivism and involvement.

To avoid a waste of public funds, it is really important to understand how the “beehive” behaves. Delegates were not sure what research had already been conducted in this area. It was agreed that “local, anthropological” research is needed to properly characterise the more intractable rural problems – for example, it was acknowledged to be really difficult to characterise rural problems such as deprivation not only because the problem itself was unevenly spread but also because rural areas are poor (for a number of reasons) at articulating their deprivation. The “superoutputs” (e.g. indices of multiple deprivation) don’t pick up rural problems as well as they pick up urban problems.

Related to this, it was agreed to be very difficult to measure social capital. Even “simple” information (such as who is actually using community assets such as the village hall) is not accessible and needs to be rather detailed information in order to be useful. There was a question as to whether there was a link between measuring social capital and the state of the community’s physical assets.

Problems associated with consultations with communities were also discussed. Get the most buy-in from communities where you engage communities early on, but this in itself causes a problem – ideally the conversation would be based around one single point of contact, but unless a holistic view is taken (and views of related issues are captured at the same time) then it becomes difficult to avoid “consultation fatigue”. Especially for interaction between communities and the planning system, it seems more a problem of process than of a lack of research evidence.

Following up the theme of not knowing sufficient about “how the beehive behaves”, it was felt useful to study “early adopters’” behaviour. Example of this is in Lewes, which recently declared itself a “transition town” and seems very serious about developing low carbon behaviours.

The conversation approached the concept of Rural Values versus affordability, especially following the latest debate on chickens and battery farming. Part of the rural values is the recognition of the local resources and identifying exploitation routes.

Another question posed is whether, merely because something is rural, is it necessarily ‘green’? It is felt that rural areas need a more rigorous analysis of where improvements can be made.



*Question 2: Reflecting on the issues that were identified in the first discussion, what don't we know that we really need to know to make progress on these issues?*

Sustainable and adaptive landscapes in a changing environment. Do we know what the environmental response might be?

Do we understand the connectivity of the natural landscape – how do we match this to the connectivity of the social landscape?

What are the core values of rural communities?

Is there an attachment to the rural community?

How to take advantage of climate change.

Grazing economy & sustainable stock farming is a key issue. How do we actually do it?

What does sustainability look like at a local level? AND  
How to get the understanding of sustainability translating to local communities.

What is the current understanding of 'community'?

How do we get to the socially excluded?

- understanding the numbers;
- the exact nature and diversity of exclusion/ deprivation.

Need to better understand how rural areas/ systems operate.

Relation between production/ consumption/ destruction?

Can a cooperative farming approach work in the South East? Social enterprise seems to be the route that works at the moment – craft & farmers markets, food groups, community & services.

What are the good practices surrounding reducing the need to travel & reducing isolation?

How can we generate demand for products and identify markets?

Who knows what? – What are they teaching at school?

How can we get access to information?



Understanding the variability in human responses to complex issues (such as climate change) was felt to be our largest knowledge gap. Crisis events (such as flooding, F & M, hosepipe bans) can clearly change people's responsiveness to a particular topic, and there are also more subtle changes over time. One group felt that there is a dearth of **longitudinal studies on people's values and motivations** (e.g. value of family within suite of values). It's important to understand how people will react to an offered product or strategy – for example, green roofs can be “marketed” to appeal to a certain set of values if we understand how the “product ” (e.g. green roof) fits against people's view of their own values. It was suggested that longitudinal studies such as Taylor Nelson's applied futures could be more widely used.

For one of the AONBs, their biggest gap in knowledge is about people's cultural perceptions of landscapes. Difficult to have the right conversations, because government often use words like heritage as shorthand for “ruins” and this is not what people understand by heritage. End up talking about proxies. Need to create processes that allow for research to capture peoples' social values as well as other factors. However, not easy to make a simple characterisation of people's social values for something like biodiversity. Scoring respondents as ‘A’ to ‘D’ on a biodiversity “profile” was felt to be a meaningless exercise!

In the context of sustainability, it is felt that what we need to know is the policy measure which will increase an area's resilience. **Concept of resilience** also linked to diversity? Policy may need to take into account that creating/maintaining diversity in the landscape is expensive – maybe policy makers need only be interested in the level of diversity which will increase an area's resilience? This whole topic of landscapes is complicated by the fact that some landscapes are exciting because they are vast, rather than that they are diverse!

Another group started its discussion with a question as to **what is a Community**, in terms of who rural researcher groups should be engaging with. Usually the most vocal in a community are not necessarily representative of the community itself. The feeling is that it is a series of networks joined by mutual interest that, to the outside world, *look like* a community. The next question therefore is the relative strength of rural versus peri-urban and urban communities. Difficult for researchers to assess where are the best points of contact eg the parish council, local schools, the pub, post office etc.

In terms of problems that need identifying, the topic of qualitative appreciation of the existing data also came up, with the need to be able to drill down into the set to find out more information regarding the community from which the data came, e.g. ethnographic research aspects.



Again the complexity of a system's engineering approach was brought up with a desire to understand the process and relationships within the system, e.g. the rural community.

As an example, in regard to rural deprivation, how has it been measured, within the measurement there are non-standard issues specific to a rural community, so again the need for more detailed analysis to the data gathering process. And the question of facts versus perceptions needs to be addressed.

*Question 3: What role should the RRSP play in helping to address these needs?*

Producing high quality work that is of use to partners – research that means something!

Proving that change in policy can impact on the local community – win/win for all partners.

Ability to address the wider issues.

Aggregate problems from local – district – regional for researchers to undertake. (Network local strategic partnerships – South East Rural Board.

Engage with policy makers wherever possible – at the right level and in the right context.

Identify what scale rural researchers should be working at. Parish, county, region?

Do we need to think of new structures to address our problems rather than within the current structure?

Translation, communication

Statistical information which addresses the problems faced by the rural communities and those managing these communities.

Add clarity to funding process – what evidence is required for bids?

Address the tensions between stakeholders, planners and communities.

Focus on brokerage role

Brokerage – sign post at the market square.

Advise/ lead on the development of the research agenda.

Contact and relationship building with funders.



UKCDS/ RCS probably first to address.

Lots of deliberation between stakeholders and research on key issues.

Extending the network/ partnership (e.g. include businesses, other researchers).

RRSP as *model makers* – face-to-face and website

RRSP as knowledge source for current funding opportunities.

Attract funding for networking and workshops.

Help with Data

- Where you go to find it
- Road map of who has it

It has a social value in regard to face-to-face interaction, clustering and networks. The partnership could provide a different way of communicating with groups, communities- (refer to above in the right definition of a community though).

One other problem that was highlighted in the discussion was the need for a common language to be used.

The RRSP role is to bring people together, to facilitate research integration and act as interpreter. We are also seen as the producer of qualitative information and its validation, thereby providing credibility. This implies an involvement of social scientists into the mix to translate to decision and policy makers.

In regards to complex issues, the RRSP can provide the case study approach to complex issues, rather than the generic approach that policy makers want. This is where our value lies. We bring the end-user together with the researcher. We also need to provide levels of knowledge that satisfy different agenda and develop approaches that can be applied locally. Hence strategy can be based on the sum of local ingredients.

One area that the RRSP can address is trust between the stakeholders and policy makers, achieved through translation and the drilling down exercise to give the policy a local dimension.



## Appendix 2: Speaker Profiles

**Dr Stuart Burgess** – Chairman of the Commission for Rural Communities and the Government's Rural Advocate

Stuart chairs the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), the body established in 2005 to tackle disadvantage and to ensure that government policies reflect the real needs of people living and working in rural England. As the Government's Rural Advocate, Stuart's role helps him to meet and listen to rural people, communities and businesses and to stay in touch with the issues which affect them. He is a former Chairman of the Countryside Agency and has also been involved in a variety of rural and social regeneration projects.

Stuart's earlier work was for the Methodist Church, for which has undertaken a variety of regional, national and international leadership roles, working with overseas governments and ecumenical partners. He also worked with the Presidents of Zambia and Malawi, the IMF, the World Bank and the Treasury on the cancellation of debt for poor countries.

Stuart is a member of the ethics committee for the Department of Work and Pensions, the University Court of Nottingham and also chairs the Inter-Faith group for the Metropolitan Police and the 'Safer Neighbourhoods Scheme' for the London Boroughs.

**Philip Eadie** – Head of the South East England Intelligence Network (SEE-iN)

The South East England Intelligence Network (SEE-iN) is the Regional Observatory for the South East. This information hub, funded by SEEDA, aims to facilitate access to a wide range of information about the region and to encourage better dissemination and understanding of this information. SEE-iN recently launched the Data Hub, an interactive data tool providing direct access to over 100 data sets. During the past month SEE-iN has published a new report, *The Rural South East: An evidence base*, which provides the latest data on rural topics such as demographics, economics, exclusion, agriculture, biodiversity and landscape.

Philip is a geography graduate, who also holds a Masters in Environmental Politics and Global Development. Prior to joining SEE-iN, Philip held several positions with the Countryside Agency, focusing on research, rural policy and partnerships both at a national and regional scale. His specialist areas of interest include rural issues and geovisualisation. Philip is also the current Chair of the Association of Regional Observatories.

**Valerie Carter** – Rural Director of the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)

As Rural Director at SEEDA, Valerie leads on rural issues in the region, with a particular focus on developing sustainability and addressing climate change issues. As part of these initiatives, SEEDA recently announced that



£60 million Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) funding will be invested in the region, to improve the competitiveness and diversity of its rural economy.

Valerie is a Chartered Town Planner, and has worked in both the public and private sectors. She worked for Kent County Council Planning Department for 12 years, before taking a career break to bring up her family. She joined the Rural Development Commission in 1984 and worked with them until its demise. From 1993 Valerie was Area and then Regional Manager for the 9 counties of the South East region. She transferred to the South East England Development Agency in April 1999. She is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, a member of the international committee of the European Council for Villages and Small Towns and a member of The European Rural University and Chair of its English network.

**Dr Ed Metcalfe** – Chief Scientific Advisor, South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)

Ed is SEEDA's Chief Scientific Advisor and also leads the Science, Technology, Entrepreneurship & Management team. This focuses on developing the skills needed for a knowledge economy, and encouraging business innovation, through greater engagement with the knowledge base. Recent projects include multiversities at Medway and Hastings, a demand-led innovation advisory service, an Innovation Platform collaboration on intelligent transport, and - with e-Skills UK - developing Computer Clubs for Girls.

Ed has the national RDA lead role for regional Science and Innovation and leads and co-chairs the RDA/DA Regional Innovation, Science and Technology leads group, overseeing sharing of good practice in knowledge transfer and innovation, including implementation of science and industry councils' regional input to the Technology Strategy Board. He is also chair of the SCI (Society of Chemical Industry).

He has a PhD in biophysical chemistry. Much of his career has been in academia - he was Head of the School of Chemical and Life Sciences at the University of Greenwich for 10 years, where he also directed a spin-out company and the ACOL/ BIOTOL open learning unit for analytical chemistry and biotechnology. His most recent research has been in chemometrics and in fire retardant materials.

**Dr Anja Ueberjahn-Tritta** – RRSP Partnership Co-ordinator

As Partnership Co-ordinator for the Rural Research Strategy Partnership Co-ordinator, Anja is working on behalf of the five founder partners of the Rural Research and Strategy Partnership (RRSP), namely Forest Research, the Universities of Reading, Surrey, Sussex and the University College for the Creative Arts (UCCA). The role involves running research workshops and stakeholder events and facilitating the development of new



collaborative research projects involving the partners. Anja is based at Forest Research's Farnham offices.

After gaining a degree in Environmental Sciences with Environmental Policy from Oxford Brookes University, Anja completed a research degree in Environmental Planning. She worked as a member of the Impact Assessment Unit at Oxford Brookes, and was involved in a number of European Commission funded research projects, including the ASCCUE (Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in the Urban Environment) project, which formed part of the EPSRC/UKCIP 'Building Knowledge for a Changing Climate' initiative. More recently, Anja worked as an Environmental Coordinator at the environmental consultancy company, Jacobs UK Ltd. She is also an Associate Lecturer for the Open University.

**Professor Peter John Bunyan** - Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey on Local and Regional Affairs

As Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey on Local and Regional Affairs, Peter is involved in developing strategies for public agencies responsible for economic development at regional, county and local levels. With particular interests in knowledge transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship, Peter has been instrumental in developing the contacts between the University's Research Park and its academic faculty. He has also assisted development of strategic partnerships with UK and overseas universities that have similar aspirations to Surrey, resulting in valuable academic and business exchanges.

Peter studied as a chemist/biochemist at University College Durham, Kings College and University College London. He has a special interest in agriculture and the development of the rural economy, having spent more than thirty years in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now Defra). Initial research into the side effects of pesticides on wildlife, in what is now the Central Science Laboratory at York, was followed by roles in scientific administration and policy formulation in the food and agriculture sectors. From 1989-95 Peter served as Director General of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS) and Chief Scientific Adviser to the Minister.

After 1995, Peter remained active in farming and the natural sciences, with roles as Honorary Secretary of the Institute of Biology, Chairman of the British Crop Production Council, Director of Horticulture Research International and Visiting Professor of Agriculture and Horticulture at De Montfort University.

**Professor Stephen Nortcliff** - Professor of Soil Science in the Department of Soil Science at the University of Reading





Stephen has recently stepped down as Head of Reading University's Soil Science Department, and has almost thirty years experience in this Department, working in many different areas of Soil Science. In recent years he has focused on the broad area of organic additions (sewage sludge, anaerobic digest and compost) to soil and sustainable land management. In this context Stephen was actively involved in work on the EC's Thematic Strategy for Soil Development, and co-chaired the Working Group on Organic Matter and Biodiversity. He had a similar active participation in the Soil Action Plan for England and is involved in current discussion on the Soil Strategy for England.

Since 2002, Stephen has been Secretary General of the International Union of Soil Sciences. He is also Adjunct Professor of Soil Science at Clemson University, South Carolina, USA.

**Sharon Phillips** – Acting Head of Research and Enterprise,  
University of Sussex

As the University of Sussex's Acting Head of Research and Enterprise, Sharon co-ordinates and manages the outreach team and interface between business, community and the University of Sussex.

She has extensive experience in organisational development and management of change having worked on a consultancy basis with corporates such as; Virgin Atlantic, Lloyds TSB, Avis Europe, Glaxo Smithkline and also with SMEs and has been a visiting lecturer for Henley Management College. She is also an Investor in People Advisor and a director of the Sussex Careers Service.

She previously was an HR Manager for Selfridges and Debenhams and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Department and a member of the British Psychological Society.

Following the completion of an MA in Social Policy and Business Administration, her interest in connections with the community grew, including a link with Common Purpose, formulated by the Chief Executive of The Industrial Society to encourage business to participate within communities. A particular project involved Price Waterhouse Coopers linking mentors with School Head Teachers in partnership with Education Business Partners. She has been a secondary school governor for 14 years and a member of the Education Authority Work Development Board. She has also advised local colleges on Business Curriculum Issues and is a member of her church parish council.

**Alison Melvin** – Commercial Director, Forest Research

Alison heads Forest Research's Business Development and Commercialisation activities, with a particular focus on developing



strategic partnerships, both with Forest Research's UK and international research collaborators and with industrial partners. She has particular interests in organisational development and in supporting innovation.

Alison graduated in French and Business Administration from Loughborough University and was awarded the Bowater Scott prize for the best business faculty student. Alison completed a Diploma in Industrial Studies at Alcan Aluminium before joining Mobil Oil, where she worked for twelve years, in a number of roles, including Logistics Analyst, crude oil trader, Market Research Manager and UK Supply Manager. Prior to joining Forest Research, she lived in Belgium for five years, where she worked as a volunteer for a number of charities and was publications editor for a women's charity.

**Dr Phil Costen** – Surrey University Research and Enterprise Services group manager

Phil has worked in the Research and Enterprise Services group at the University of Surrey since 2002. His role focuses on developing collaborative links between the Engineering and Physical Science research base at the University and other HEIs, government agencies, funding councils and industry. Phil is additionally the University of Surrey rowing coach

After studying physics at the Ballarat School of Mines, Ballarat, Australia, Phil gained a Master's degree in Radiation and Environmental Protection and a PhD in Chemical and Process Engineering at the University of Surrey. He was appointed a Rugby Cement PLC Research Fellow at Surrey, investigating increased energy efficiency and reduced emissions in large process plants. Following several years as a motor mechanic in a rural vintage car garage, he joined Imperial College's Mechanical Engineering Department as a Senior Research Fellow. Here his research interests continued in the area of combustion and emissions associated with fossil and waste fuels in power generation and high temperature process plants and the thermal treatment of wastes.

**Uwe Derksen** – Acting Head of Research and Knowledge Transfer, University College for the Creative Arts

Uwe is responsible for the delivery and monitoring of the University College's business and community strategies, income generation, corporate sponsorship and enterprise.

Socialized in the rural part of North Rhine Westphalia (Germany), where he was educated to go on to study Social Sciences (Duisburg), followed by studying Sociology at the University of Kent. Over fifteen years of experience in Knowledge Transfer, Enterprise, Innovation and CPD activities, which in the last six years, Uwe applied specifically to the



creative arts and creative industries. Much of his work has been through specific initiatives (over thirty in total) that he has developed in support of experimenting and testing new type of knowledge transfer and CPD provision and innovation tools. Through this work he has been able to secure significant funding, often in direct support of disadvantage groups (unemployed, bmes, women returners, creative practitioners and micro-businesses), that is those groups for which mainstream provision is often inappropriate. Other initiatives included the development of specific innovation guidance, assessment tools and project-based learning concepts for SMEs.

In his work Uwe has been fortunate enough to work with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector institutions, including the Red Cross and National Trade Union in Germany, a range of universities, research, technology and training centres from across Europe, and in recent years specialist art & design institutions and corporate companies, such as Sony, Pfizer and the Post Office. In the past Uwe was seconded to the Government Office for the South East to organise the launch of the 2000 ESF programme. He also headed up the South East HE ESF Technical Assistance Office for a number of years and recently acted as the Creative Industries Champion for the HEFCE/OST Knowledge Transfer Group.