

Eshott Residents Association

Secretary: Mr J Secker
Emerson House,
Bainbridge Lane,
Eshott,
Morpeth,
Northumberland
NE65 9FD
24th April 2007

Mr A Clarke
Chief Executive, One NorthEast
Mr D Chalmers
Regional Director - North, Country Land and Business Association

Dear Sir

The North East Rural Estates Framework Pilot - Eshott Hall Estate

I am writing to you as the Chairman of the Eshott Residents Association. The Residents Association represents 26 of the 30 freehold dwellings in the village of Eshott. Two of the remaining four houses are rented and the owners unknown. Over the last few months we have been involved with Eshott Hall Estate who has been using the North East Rural Estates Framework Pilot.

The reason I am writing to you is to register the fact that the views of the majority of the people who live in the village of Eshott have been ignored and not taken into account in this project.

We have attended two meetings during this project. The first on the 12th December 2006 included an explanation by Mr D Stewart of the background and process of the Rural Estates Framework project to investigate the sustainability of rural estates. We were also handed out a questionnaire that Eshott Hall Estate had compiled. We wrote to Mr D Stewart raising serious concerns with the questionnaire:

- Two separate and often conflicting issues had been combined into each question.
- There was an undue emphasis on planning issues.
- The questionnaire was handed out to many people who had no geographical link to Eshott Hall Estate or Eshott village and who had no direct impact or active interest in the sustainability of the Eshott Hall Estate. (These were primarily contractors and suppliers working

for Eshott Homes Ltd on the Hartford Hall Estate housing development.)

A copy of the full text sent to Mr Stewart is attached.

A second meeting was held on the 1st March 2007. The results of the questionnaire were given. Of the 141 replies analysed 83 were from business partners, 46 from staff, 6 from tenants and 6 from homeowners. The submission made by the Eshott Residents Association on behalf of the 26 households in the village was completely ignored as can be seen from the figures above.

As such the analysis from the questionnaire does not represent the views of the people who live in the village of Eshott.

In addition the people living in the village were completely excluded from the Audit, Aspirations and Visioning stages of the process.

It was our understanding that the purpose of the North East Rural Estates Project was to investigate how to provide a sustainable environment for rural communities by regenerating rural estates. We conclude that this project at Eshott is not a Community led project about the Sustainability of Eshott Hall Estate but a project led by Eshott Hall Estate to leverage advantage from public funds or grants for the furtherance of developing a 10 year business plan for the businesses with registered offices at Eshott Home Farm.

Our contention is that Eshott does not fit into the type of rural community you are trying to assist. Eshott village consists of thirty freehold houses and a few tenanted cottages. It happens to be adjacent to a Hall which has some land and a small number of tenants. For you to include any output from the implementation of the North East Rural Estates Framework Pilot by Eshott Hall Estate in any Regeneration effort and use Public Funds for this purpose is not in accordance with the purpose and the remit you have defined for the North East Rural Estates Framework Pilot projects.

We would welcome the opportunity of discussing this issue with you.

Yours sincerely

Oliver Clarke
Chairman - Eshott Residents Association