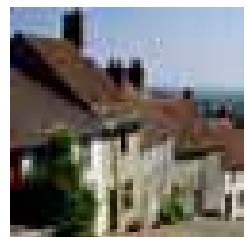


New technology and industrialisation as well as social and economic changes have influenced patterns of population, shaped the natural and built environment, and created a diverse economy. Yet the transformation of rural activities and infrastructure has been occurring for centuries, so why are we now talking about a 'rural crisis'?

Rural development



Capability statement

Rural development

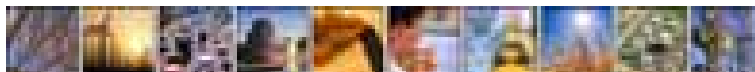
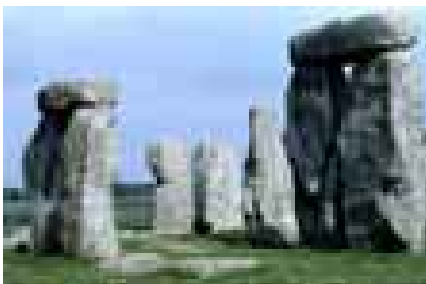
Positive commitments to address these situations are already apparent both in policy drivers and action on the ground. Public support for farmers' markets and the Market Town Initiative attest to this as does the wide recognition of the need for sustainable development. The private sector is also recognising a need to balance economic, social and environmental aspirations and to make a positive contribution to local communities.

Care must of course be taken to recognise that it is not just remote villages, the agricultural sector and the countryside that is affected. Rural development must address all areas outside the main urban centres.



Public and private sector decision makers and investors can facilitate a successful response to the current situation by promoting an understanding of the current and emerging problems, identifying opportunities for change and creating the circumstances for achieving success.

Entec is able to deploy an integrated team that draws together the diversity of skills necessary to assist in the development of these effective and appropriate response strategies across social, economic and environment perspectives.



One of the key challenges faced by those seeking to foster rural development is the uniqueness of each situation and of the activities that may be appropriate to revitalise the rural economy. Against this diversity of pressures, Entec can provide support in:

Understanding the issues - Consultation with stakeholders or independent assessment of baseline conditions ensure all parties share a clear understanding of the pressures and influences creating change and the need for a response.

Developing the response - Experience shows that much can be gained from gathering baseline data and seeking to establish clear cause and effect relationships that have led to the current circumstances. Drawing from experience and success elsewhere, with appropriate innovation, solutions can be developed which are robust, deliverable and cost-effective.

Implementation - Ensuring effective implementation is critical to longer term success. Whether it is engaging stakeholders, facilitating the establishment of partnership or delivering engineered or built solutions, Entec has an enviable reputation for delivery.

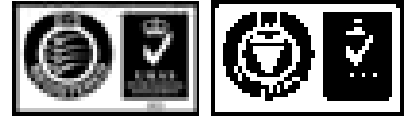
Monitoring and evaluation - Assessing the effectiveness of actions and identifying improvement opportunities contributes to longer term success. Monitoring can also provide early warning of emerging issues, allowing remedial action to be undertaken when most effective.

A diversity of circumstances



Entec

Entec is one of the UK's largest environmental and engineering consultancies. Our technical and business skills are dedicated to delivering strategic, technical and engineering solutions which bring commercial benefit to customers at home and overseas. This know-how is based on over 60 years' consulting experience in the public and private sectors.



Certificate No. EMS 69090

Certificate No. FS13881

Entec operates a Quality Management System in accordance with the latest requirements of the international standard BS EN ISO 9001 and an Environmental Management System compliant with BS EN ISO 14001. Both are audited by BSI Management Systems.



Rural development

Entec's approach

Developing an effective strategy to meet challenges created by a diversity of circumstances requires an approach based around a number of core principles:

Focus on outcomes. One of the key features of Entec's approach to projects is to focus on outcomes. This is distinct from the outputs that may be produced by the project (such as the recommendations of a study, or the physical output of a construction project) which may serve more as stepping stones or signposts to a successful outcome.

Response to emerging findings. A responsive attitude to emerging information and findings ensures maximum value can be gained from the resources available to the project. At Entec we reinforce this with a focus on building effective relationships with our clients, something we achieve by providing clear and objective advice.

Innovation. The pressures on rural areas are such that a continuation of historic activities will generally not provide the means for revitalisation. Innovation and the adoption of new response strategies are often more appropriate. Against this background it is essential to gain a clear understanding of the current circumstances, identify what has triggered them, clarify who is affected directly or indirectly and establish the wider consequences that may exist.

Stakeholder engagement. It is clear that the most effective responses are those which capture the active involvement of stakeholders and forge effective partnerships. Achieving this empowerment itself poses real challenges, particularly if an area has been in decline for some time and the stakeholders believe (rightly or wrongly) that they have no ability to make a difference. Early consultation and involvement in key decision stages can kick-start this process, and experience shows that consultation can turn a spiral of decline into effective, community-driven change.



Entec's services in rural development

Our response to projects is based around establishing effective project teams providing the combination of specialists needed to develop solutions. The skills we can deploy include the following:

Stakeholder consultation and engagement to involve local people in decision making: questionnaire surveys, interviews, focus groups, workshops, 'planning for real'

Socio-economics and social impact assessment: effects of development, employment strategies and analysis of trends, community capacity studies

Economic analysis: economic feasibility studies, environmental economics, cost benefit analysis

Development planning: planning policy appraisals, planning strategies, planning applications and appeals

Masterplanning & urban design: concept feasibility studies through to detailed site layout

Landscape and visual design: streetscape and townscape design, planting schemes, impact assessment of development proposals

Regeneration: feasibility studies, detailed scheme design, engineering and implementation supervision

Noise, air and odour: investigation and mitigation studies, development proposal impact assessment

Nature conservation: habitats and species studies and impact assessments, conservation and bio-diversity strategies)

Contaminated land: land quality assessments, site investigations, risk based remediation strategies, contractor supervision

Traffic and transport: traffic impact assessments, green transport plans and strategies and impact assessments

Cultural heritage & archaeology: listed & historic buildings, desk and field studies, mitigation and interpretation strategies

Hydrology / Hydrogeology: surface and groundwater flow modelling, flood defence, sustainable drainage studies)

Food and agriculture: policy development and evaluation, sectoral studies, environmental interactions

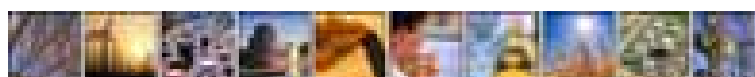
Sustainable development: sustainability appraisals of plans, policies or development proposals, indicators of change

Cluster analysis: existence of effective clusters, potential and strategy for their development.



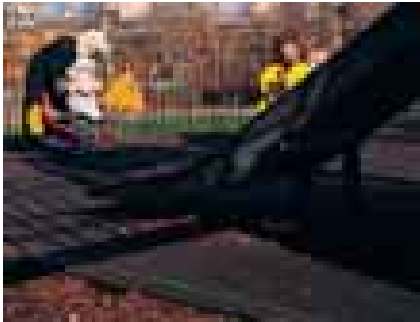
Case studies

The following pages demonstrate Entec's capabilities in the area of rural development, using case study examples. ►



Market Towns Monitoring and Evaluation Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency is assisting the most vulnerable market towns in England seek strong futures for themselves through the Market Towns Initiative, launched in May 2001 for 3+years. The initiative consists of funding for selected towns and provides guidance through a web-based market towns toolkit. The agency is keen to learn lessons from the application of the healthcheck and the development of visions and action plans as soon as they are apparent and asked Entec to develop and implement a questionnaire based survey approach to understand the experience of each market town in the first year. Around 80 completed questionnaires were returned from the 120 towns in the programme at the time.



*Reviewing a
key rural
development tool*

The breadth of understanding of economic, environmental and social interactions and extensive experience of developing monitoring and evaluation strategies, that Entec staff provided, enabled an effective questionnaire to be developed and used. This provided a cost-effective approach to data collection, that was supplemented with targeted telephone discussions to further inform specific issues. A key benefit of this approach, at this relatively early stage of the initiative, was to ensure effective integration of more qualitative judgements of progress and success with the relatively limited quantitative data and evidence available.

The responses received have endorsed the effectiveness of the initiative in facilitating community led regeneration and allowed the Countryside Agency to establish a strong case for continued funding and development of the approach beyond current commitments. Our analysis also identified a number of lessons and opportunities for enhancement of the initiative, that are currently being incorporated into the healthcheck and the guidance provided to towns, that will

contribute to enhanced success in the future. Recommendations were also made for revisions to the evaluation approach for subsequent years to ensure that more effective use could be made of the increasing evidence of success that would become available.

In parallel with this, Entec also investigated how changes in community empowerment arising from the initiative, a key performance indicator, could be more effectively monitored. Following a literature review, an approach based on four key aspects of: involvement; empowerment; friendship; and confidence was developed and candidate measures of change identified. These are being considered by the Countryside Agency prior to incorporating them in monitoring activities in coming years.



West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework Baseline Study Forestry Commission, Advantage West Midlands, West Midlands Regional Assembly

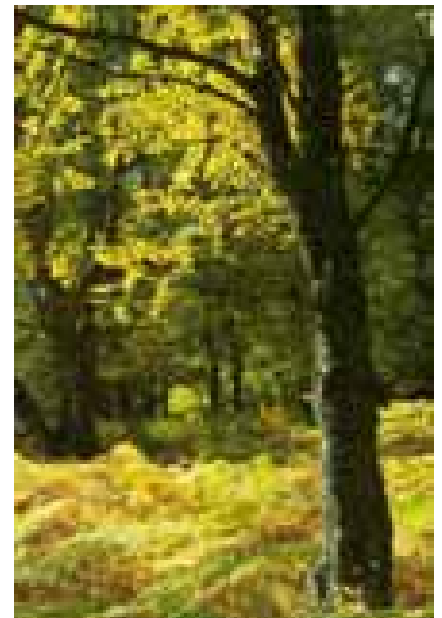
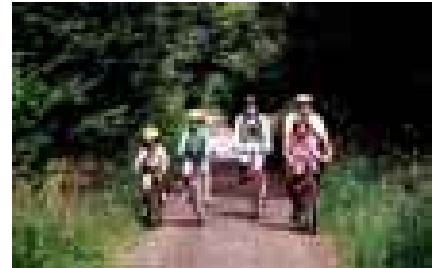
The Forestry Commission, Advantage West Midlands and West Midlands Regional Assembly, appointed Entec to establish a baseline of the woodland sector's contribution to the West Midlands region and identify strategic priorities for the sector's development. This is being used to lead the production of the Regional Forestry Framework for the West Midlands that will guide the future development of woodland and forestry's contribution to the West Midlands. A broad view was taken of the benefits of forestry including traditional timber related activities as well as non-timber benefits such as tourism, recreation, health, regeneration, social inclusion, renewable energy and environmental services.

Drawing on a breadth of expertise in environmental economics, sustainable development, economic regeneration, rural development, stakeholder consultation and socio-economics more generally, Entec was able to provide both a comprehensive

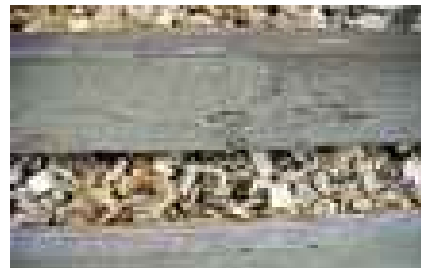
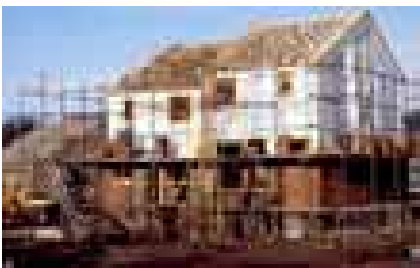
overview of this broad and diverse sector as well as assessing its current and potential contribution to the economy and quality of life of the West Midlands.

Entec also researched into areas of support, such as business support for micro-businesses or funding commitments to woodland-based health initiatives, that act as limiting factors or represent unrealised potential for the woodland sector, especially in the context of its contribution to economic regeneration. Entec then recommended strategic directions for developing the sector to its full potential within the context of key regional strategies and sources of funding support.

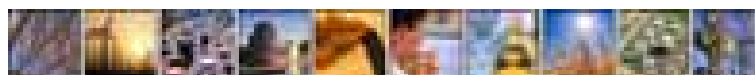
Throughout the course of the project, as well as analysing existing information, Entec worked in close consultation with individuals and organisations within the West Midlands to ensure that their views and perceptions were properly reflected in the project outputs. By rooting analysis in the context of regional needs, as defined by stakeholder perceptions and existing regional strategies, in particular the Regional Economic Strategy, Entec developed recommendations that focused on key areas with real potential for development that provide sound pointers for the production of the Regional Forestry Framework itself.



Analysing and valuing woodland and forestry sector contributions to the economy, quality of life and environment of the West Midlands; and identifying development priorities



All photographs provided by courtesy of the Forestry Commission



Evaluating Methods for Public Participation Environment Agency

Entec was commissioned to carry out a study into the techniques that the Environment Agency could use to increase participation by stakeholders, with respect to licence applications. Entec formed a team with PDA International and the University of Birmingham to meet the needs of the Agency.

Traditional stakeholder engagement techniques entail distribution, and feedback on, printed material. In some cases stakeholder engagement can extend to presentations and discussions at public meetings. Newer methods include two-way communications processes such as consensus building and citizens' juries. The study developed an approach to licence application consultation using the principles of these newer methods and compared the effectiveness of that method with a more traditional approach.

Considerable work was carried out to identify various stakeholder issues through a simulated stakeholder engagement exercise with the public and through an Agency workshop in which minds were concentrated on the stakeholder concerns of community groups, planning authorities, developers and special interest groups. The result has been a detailed exploration of stakeholder perceptions, reasons for those perceptions and considerations in co-ordinating dialogue around issues of concern.

The study will inform the development of the Agency's policy and practice on stakeholder engagement and produced training material and guidance on the use of the techniques by the Agency.

The study has included:

- a review of current and emerging stakeholder participation and consultation techniques;
- a trial of an innovative stakeholder participation and consultation technique;
- the collation of the experiences of Agency staff in stakeholder participation; and
- the compilation of best practice and training materials for the Agency, regarding stakeholder participation and consultation for licence applications.



*Defining the Agency's approach to
stakeholder engagement in relation to
licence applications*



Alternative Approaches to Assessing the Aesthetic Quality of the Environment Environment Agency

The Environment Agency (EA) wanted to understand how members of the public appraise the urban and rural areas in which they walk or travel during their working and leisure time. With considerable expenditure being made by the EA and others on improving the environment, or reducing detrimental impacts, there was a need to understand how the public formed their perceptions of environmental quality. This could then be captured in an approach that would sit alongside other assessments being made of, for example, bathing beaches.

An extensive literature review was undertaken to identify techniques that had been used to assess environmental quality. Building from this, and the findings of a series of focus groups, two interview surveys were undertaken with a sample of the public in three pilot areas. The first of these investigated the most effective interview approach (in-street, in-home etc) and tested alternative means for capturing assessments of quality. The second survey then applied the selected techniques to allow refinement of the questionnaire used and illustration of the analysis possible with real survey information.

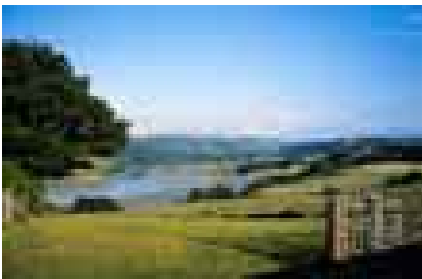
It was clear from the work that weighting / scoring approaches would not be successful in capturing the aggregated effects of smells, sights, sounds and other perceived qualities, partly because of the complex interaction due to the positive and negative associations that could exist. There were also many diverse situations in which quality needed to be assessed from

the pristine natural countryside of the national parks through to declining residential areas. The recommended approach prompted respondents to consider the area where they lived and its surroundings against their ideal characteristics for the area. It recognised that housing areas would generally remain as housing areas but that litter, poor designs etc could detract from the best appearance.

One important finding of the focus groups was the importance of local pride in the environmental quality of the area. Where this was present there was positive feedback to maintain and enhance the area, where it was absent then decline could be expected to accelerate.

The recommended strategy for data collection and interpretation was incorporated within the Environment Agency's R&D programme in the following year.

Capturing the public's perceptions of their surrounding environments



Research into Affordable Housing Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR)



The DTLR was concerned at the role and effectiveness of planning policy in the delivery of affordable housing.

The research was commissioned over a 12 month period and was undertaken by Entec in association with the Centre for Residential Development at Nottingham Trent University, Three Dragons Consultancy - who specialise in affordable housing issues and the Town and Country Planning Association.

The concern of Government was how effective planning policy was in the delivery of affordable housing. Affordable housing can be delivered in two ways through the provision of Section 106 Agreements and by the use of so called 'Exception' policy to provide affordable housing in rural areas.

The project was aimed at exploring the effectiveness of affordable housing provision throughout the country and examined both forms of delivery. An initial scoping survey was undertaken to examine practice throughout England, this was followed by an in-depth analysis of five regions which was carried out using a detailed questionnaire examining current practice and a number of case study interviews with key staff. Whilst the research concentrated upon the enablers within affordable housing provision, a series of focus groups was held to examine the role of developers and social housing providers in this process.

The research demonstrated the overall effectiveness of planning policy in affordable housing provision and

highlighted both regional differences and those between urban and rural areas. It identified better practice and sought to suggest where improvements might be made to the delivery process.

The project will inform the 'Better Practice Guide' to be produced by DTLR in due course.

Exploring the effectiveness of planning policy in the delivery of affordable housing



Catterick Garrison Development Strategy Defence Estates

Catterick Garrison is the largest army town in the UK. Through the 'Strategic Defence Review' it has been identified that the Garrison will continue to expand for the foreseeable future. Alongside this, the Ministry of Defence's requirement to address 'quality of life' issues for its own personnel has become a key driver in seeking to ensure that the local population, both military and civilian, is the beneficiary of a broad range of high quality facilities.

Defence Estates (DE) administer the purchase, development and disposal of land on behalf of the MOD in the UK. Entec has been the lead consultant on this project for DE since 1995. Alongside DE and Army representatives, Entec prepared and presented the new draft Town Centre Masterplan for the regeneration of Catterick Garrison town centre to an audience of about 50 local businesses and stakeholders. The draft masterplan is the culmination of several years work, in partnership with the district council and other local bodies. It forms part of the second phase of development within the Garrison following the successful completion of the Richmondshire Walk Retail Park, which includes a new Tesco Superstore and other leading retailers, as well as the new Darlington College campus.

The new draft Masterplan embraces the provision of key community and commercial facilities namely:

- a new sports and leisure centre, to include a new swimming pool for the garrison and much needed facilities for the many young families living locally;
- the complete redevelopment of the existing retail area within the town centre for a mix of shopping, leisure, housing and community uses;
- the improvement of the local environment through planting, new street furniture, signage and additional CCTV; and



Creating a dynamic town centre

- a potential discount food store, car dealership and hotel chain to locate in new landmark buildings, signalling the arrival point to a re-vitalised town centre.

Entec, Defence Estates and the MOD have led the promotion of the Garrison through Regional Planning Guidance, the County Structure Plan, the District Local Plan and via individual planning applications. The process which involved the formulation of a long-term vision and strategy for the town centre and the Garrison as a whole, required a considerable consensus building exercise to foster involvement of local authorities, statutory bodies and communities in the process. This is now culminating in real results on the ground including:

- securing planning permission for residential development at Arras Lines, a prestige housing site allocated within the Richmondshire District local plan, currently within the control of MOD and soon to be released to private developers;
- award of preferred developer status to Aldi who have subsequently secured planning permission for a discount food store on a town centre site; and
- assembly of a project team to deliver the proposed sports and leisure facility that forms part of the Masterplan.

These proposals will benefit the town centre and the civilian and military population of the Garrison.



South Gorleston Business Park - Landscape Master Plan Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Great Yarmouth Borough Council were eager to attract new employment into their area and sought to utilise a greenfield site on the edge of the town. In order for the scheme to be financially viable it needed to attract funding from the then English Partnerships. In order to secure the funding a master plan had to be prepared accompanied by a complete set of planting plans supported by a specification and a bill of quantities to facilitate an accurate cost estimate of the proposed development.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council were familiar with Entec's previous masterplanning and detail design work at Peterborough New Town and appointed them to the design team to work with other consultants for drainage design and infrastructure for the production of a phased masterplan which dealt with the inherent constraints of the site. These included the close proximity of a major hospital with an associated planting and building height restriction corridor to accommodate helicopter air ambulance

flight paths; a number of major gas pipelines crossing the site; the requirement to provide a blast safety zone for a nearby explosives store; the need to integrate several large stormwater overflow ponds into the design; and to provide a strong, attractive entrance feature whilst dealing with the problematic traffic issues of an entrance/exit onto a busy main road.

Draft design solutions were produced in co-operation with the client, English Partnerships and fellow consultant team members, including detailed consultation with helicopter experts with regard to the flight path issues. A detailed masterplan was provided to a presentation standard and this was taken as the basis for detailed planting plans to be produced. As the existing site was relatively flat arable farmland, there was only a minimal existent landscape framework, hence the primary objective of the masterplan was to provide a new framework. This was based upon provision of a dominant landscape/transport spine and a series of

self contained development areas separated by green wedges to allow the business park to develop in a number of separate phases. The site was divided into nine sub areas for each of which a planting plan was produced showing tree, shrub and grass seeding proposals including numbers, types and mixes of all the proposed softworks. A hardworks key plan was also produced. These plans were accompanied by a full specification and a detailed bill of quantities. These were produced against a very tight deadline in order to allow the client's quantity surveyors to undertake a detailed cost estimate to accompany the submission for English Partnership funding.

The complete design package allowed Great Yarmouth Borough Council to submit its proposals to English Partnerships within the agreed timescale. English Partnerships were convinced of the viability of the proposals and the client was awarded the grant aid necessary for the project to proceed.



*Turning site
constraints into
advantage for
landscape master plan*



Rural development

Sample client list

Countryside Agency
Yorkshire Forward
One North East
South East of England
Development Agency
Bellway
Westbury Homes
Defence Estates
DEFRA
North West Development
Agency



Rural development

Entec

*For further details on
Entec's full range of environmental and engineering services:*

Telephone

0800 371733 (UK)
+44 (0) 191 272 6100 (Overseas)

Fax

0191 272 6592 (UK)
+44 (0) 191 272 6592 (Overseas)

E-mail

info@entecuk.co.uk

Web site

www.entecuk.com

