The Role and Economic Function of Rural Estates

Gary Bosworth, University of Lincoln
with Jason Beedell, Smiths Gore, and
Ivan Annibal, Rose Regeneration
What is a Rural Estate?

Copped Hall - an ancient hunting park and rural estate

Chatsworth estate, Derbyshire
What is a Rural Estate?

• An area of land managed as a whole organisation with overlying aims
• Estates tend to own a range of assets – land, houses, workspace and community facilities
• Estates are differentiated from farms based on the diversity of their assets
• The sizes of estates identified ranged from 100 acres (40ha) to over 20,000 acres (8,000ha)
The estate sector in the East Midlands

- 290 estates
- 364,000 hectares (900,000 acres)
- 23% of region’s land area
- 70% private,
  10% public,
  20% institutional / charity owned
North East Rural Estates Framework

- A pilot programme to bring estates and the public sector closer together.
- 40% of NE in estates ownership
- “Paternalistic” approach
- Estates and government policy have similar objectives.
- “Partnership between the public sector and individual estates could provide a truly cost effective and innovative means to regenerate significant parts of the North-east region’s rural economy”
North East Rural Estates Framework 2

- Estates and government share the obligation to provide good value, neither is exclusively profit led.
- Estates are often well practised in applying a long-term integrated approach involving joining-up and balancing economic, environmental and community strands.
- Estates find themselves having to join-up government organisations whose individual brief is for a single issue.
- Despite the recognised contribution of estates to meeting public policy objectives, estates are absent from any key regional rural policies.
Economic Contribution

- 5,300 jobs (full-time equivalents)
- A further 13,300 working from estate owned properties
- A third of the case study estates provide more than 10% of employment in their immediate area
- On 95% of case study estates, employment was increasing
Economic Contribution 2

- Provide 2.5m ft\(^2\) (232,000m\(^2\)) workspace, 12,550 ft\(^2\) (1,170m\(^2\)) on average per estate
- 81\% growth in workspace in 5 years
- 12 of top 20 paid-for attractions by visitor numbers in the region are estates or historic houses
- Visitor numbers growing faster to estates than other attractions (2006-07)
- 80\% of estates host events
- Some estates create a destination (e.g. Burghley, Chatsworth)
Educational Role

• Environmental management: working with Sheffield University and Natural England on improving wet heathland
• New technologies: working on bio-fuels with The University of Derby
• The same estate is working with University of Derby to develop an “artisan” food college
• Hosting students: students from University of Derby carried out visitor surveys
• University of the third age: offering lectures and courses on a range of subjects
Brokers of Knowledge

• Farm managers and land agents advise farm tenants – link to professional & policy advice
• Introduction of green technologies
• Land-based training through county training groups and Lantra. Other training provided in conjunction with universities.
• Most estates did not identify any unsatisfied training needs
• Some estates deliberately try to attract Knowledge Intensive Businesses
Social and Community Role

- On average, the estates provided 70% of all private-rented sector housing in their areas.
- 13% is rent free or below market rents.
- Extrapolated to the regional level, this equates to some 870 homes being provided below market rent.
- Two thirds own and maintain community facilities including sports grounds, churches, parks, allotments, pubs and village shops
- Over 50% provide a village hall, estimated to be at least 166 village halls in the region, (14% of the regional total)
Environmental Conservation

- Estates own 23% of the region’s land so have significant say in how it is managed – this includes:
  - 29% of the region’s Ancient Monuments
  - 27% & 33% of Grades I and II* Listed Buildings
  - 50% of Parks & Gardens
  - 23% of SSSIs
- This is aside from environmental stewardship attached to agricultural land
Environmental Development

- Long term investment horizons
- Increasing linkages with business and educational worlds
- Diversification of investment portfolio
- Access to professional advice & grants
- Economies of scale associated with land resources enable green energy investments
Neo-endogenous Rural Development

• ‘Endogenous-based development in which extra-local factors are recognised and regarded as essential but which retains belief in the potential of local areas to shape their future’ (Ray, 2001)

• The potential for rural estates to shape local development - local knowledge, local resources, political influence
Links with Local Authorities

• 19 out of 20 respondents dealt with LAs.
• One indicated a close working relationship describing “Involvement with many departments...Planning, learning, education, tourism, marketing, joint promotions,” adding that “The Council contributed towards the brown signs on the motorway.”
• This was the exception – others see planning as a barrier, especially conservation areas and listed buildings.
• Grant funding also difficult to access.
Estates and Rural Development

• Key factors/opportunities:
  - long term outlook
  - Place shaping role, historical connections
  - Social responsibility and local focus
  - Environmental role
  - Increasing need to maximise income

• But…need to work with policy makers, often similar ambitions but very different perspectives
Working positively with rural estates

The scale and nature of rural estates and their contribution to the East Midlands

http://www.emda.org.uk/ruralestates/

Funded by the East Midlands Development Agency
The Role of Estates in the Rural Economy

Contact details:

Dr Gary Bosworth, Reader in Enterprise and Rural Economies, University of Lincoln, 01522 835576, gbosworth@lincoln.ac.uk

Dr Jason Beedell, Head of Research, Smiths Gore, 01733 866562, jason.beedell@smithsgore.co.uk

Ivan Annibal, Rose Regeneration Limited, Lincoln, 01522 521211, ivan.annibal@roseregeneration.co.uk