



## Essex News

### South East LEP and European Funding

The South East LEP has submitted its European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) Strategy, in accordance with national guidelines. The Strategic Economic Plan is due to be submitted by the end of March. Drafts of both documents can be found [here](#) on the SE LEP website.

It has now been confirmed that the South East LEP will receive an allocation of €18,069,267 from the European Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), equating to an indicative £14,467,947, for the period 2015-2020.

### Rural Development Programme and LEADER

It is now known that the national budget for the 2015-2020 LEADER programme will be approximately £140million. It is expected that each Local Action Group (LAG), successful in its bid will receive approximately £1.75million funding over the lifetime of the programme. For new LAGs, expressions of interest for 'transition funding' to support their development must be submitted within the next month; guidelines on this are expected to be published imminently.

## Economic

### The Fiver Challenge

2,000 children from 500 primary schools across Britain will have the opportunity to start their own business with a £5 loan, under the [Fiver Challenge](#). Children up to age 11 will be able to use the £5 to create products or services to sell, in an attempt to encourage young entrepreneurs. They will be required to pay back the original £5, but will be able to keep any profits they make. The scheme is run by Young Enterprise and Virgin Money and is supported by BIS.

### Support for Small Businesses

The Government has announced a [support package](#) for small businesses, highlighting them as being central to the government's long term economic plan. At a recent FSB event David Cameron pledged commitment to helping the country's 4.9 million small businesses. The package includes changes to business rates, growth vouchers, broadband vouchers, employment allowance, fuel duty and changes to or abolition of 3,000 regulations.

## Communities

---

### Time to Talk Day – 6<sup>th</sup> February

The national campaign [‘Time to Change’](#) is holding a Time to Talk Day. It aims to get more people talking about mental health and to help overcome fear, stigma and discrimination. The campaign wants to demonstrate that mental health problems are common and to encourage people to talk about them.

### New Independent Review into Building Social Homes

DCLG has announced a new [independent review](#) into how more social homes can be built. Launched by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander, and the Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, on 30 January, the review will assess if councils are making sufficient use of their existing powers and flexibilities to deliver new social housing. It will also look at how councils can work more closely with housing associations, housebuilders and businesses to build more new homes.

## Environment

---

### Climate Week

3-9 March 2014 is climate week. Climate Week is Britain’s largest climate change campaign and takes place annually. There is a Climate Week Challenge (for workplaces and schools) and Climate Week Awards (for organisations, communities and individuals). You could even run an event in your local community! More information about the Campaign and its individual components can be found [here](#).

### Plant Biosecurity Strategy

Environment Ministers are helping to [draft a new strategy](#) that will safeguard the future of the UK’s trees and plants against the threat of diseases like ash dieback. A ‘Plant Health Stakeholder Summit’ was held in London, to help develop a coordinated approach across the country for dealing with pests and diseases. A risk register, published on 20 January, has highlighted 700 possible threats to Britain’s trees and plants.

## Dates for your diary

---

<b>25<sup>th</sup> February 2014</b>	<b>Community Action Group Meeting</b>	RCCE Offices 10.00am	(Coffee from 9.45am)
<b>10<sup>th</sup> June 2014</b>	<b>Community Action Group Meeting</b>	RCCE Offices 10.00am	(Coffee from 9.45am)
<i>Provisional: 18.11.14</i>	<b>Community Action Group Meeting</b>	RCCE Offices 10.00am	(Coffee from 9.45am)
Date tba	<b><i>Economic Action Group meeting</i></b>	<i>RCCE Offices</i>	

---

This newsletter is produced and sent by Rural Community Council of Essex on behalf of the Essex Rural Partnership. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter in future please email [info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk](mailto:info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk) with ‘unsubscribe’ as the email subject.

Compiled and edited by Suzanne Harris, Rural Community Council of Essex.

Rural Community Council of Essex Registered Charity No. 1097009. Company registered in England and Wales No. 4609624