



Economic Action Group

Notes of meeting on
22nd January 2010

Present:

Chris Allen
Simon Brice
Fiona Bryant
John Buchanan
Martin Collison
Petra Crees

Andrew Fieldsend
Ed Gregory
Lauren Harris
Suzanne Harris
Henry Matthews
Zoe Myddleton

Dominic Petre
Kris Radley
Phil Smith
Iain Wicks
Paul Williams
Philip Wilson

1 Welcome

Philip welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Economic Action Group - in the context of a new Rural Strategy

Philip proposed future topics to be:

- Broadband
- Economic Initiatives
- Post-election issues, including planning and skills

3 ECC Rural Initiatives

Philip explained about ECCs Post Office initiative and 'Banking on Essex'. He introduced Petra Crees, who would be working on a Rural Economy Grant Scheme. This would be a phase 2 to the PO initiative phase 1.

Match funding would be required but there would be a quick turn around for applications. Grants could include money for a Comprehensive Business Review. Max grant £5,000.

The project would also assist in ways of reducing business costs, eg rates.

Fiona suggested this could align with the RDPE Axis 3 grants (up to £50,000).

Philip advised the meeting that work was underway with 'Pub is the Hub', based on data obtained in the 2008 Rural Services Survey.

Dominic asked if a review had been undertaken of 'saved' Post Offices and their recent performance. None was known. Iain Wicks reiterated that grants need to have a simple process. Petra confirmed that an enquiry form would be available, followed by business review and application form, then a score would be made within 5 working days.

4 Rural Jobs

Presentation followed by round table discussion. Andrew Fieldsend recorded this part of the meeting separately.