



AGENDA

SWALE RURAL FORUM MEETING

Date: Tuesday, 19 August 2014

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Leysdown Village Hall, Wing Road, Leysdown, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, ME12 4QR

Membership:

Councillors Barnicott, Bobbin, Monique Bonney, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, June Garrad, Nicholas Hampshire, Lesley Ingham, Gerry Lewin, Prescott (Chairman), Pat Sandle, David Simmons (Vice-Chairman) and Ben Stokes.

Other Organisations:

Kevin Attwood, Swale National Farmers Union
Mike Baldock, Kent Association of Local Councils
Peter Blandon, Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
Alastair Brooks, Swale National Farmers Union
Tom Gates, Kent County Council
Bill Gardiner, Kent Association of Local Councils
Keith Harrison, Action with Communities in Rural Kent
Rollo Parsons, Swale National Farmers Union
Canon Caroline Pinchbeck, Diocese of Canterbury
Pamela Prescott, SEESwale
Sara Tucker, Kent Association of Local Councils
Inspector Gavin Wade, Kent Rural Police Force

Quorum = 9

	Pages
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Minutes	
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 May 2014 (Minute Nos. 24 - 33) as a correct record. Link to Minutes	
3. Declarations of Interest	
Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.	
The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in	

respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

Advice to Members: If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Director of Corporate Services as Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

4. Public Session

During public session, members of the public living in the Borough of Swale may make a statement, submit a petition, or ask the Chairman any question on any matter on which the Council has powers or duties, in respect of rural matters.

Questions or statements shall be read at the meeting and shall not last more than three minutes. An answer from the Chairman may take the form of a direct oral answer or be in writing. Questions submitted to the Democratic Services section in writing (including email) at least three days before the meeting will be taken first.

PART A REPORTS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

5. Update from Kent Police

To receive a verbal update on crime in rural areas from Kent Police.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

6. Information Item - Ann Barnes (Kent Crime Commissioner)

Following a request made at the Swale Rural Forum meeting held on 27 May 2014, Ann Barnes (Kent Crime Commissioner) was invited to attend a meeting of the Swale Rural Forum.

A response has been received and Mrs Barnes has provisionally accepted an invitation to attend the Swale Rural Forum meeting on Tuesday 26 May 2015. Mrs Barnes' secretary will confirm her attendance in February 2015.

7. Rural Apprenticeships

To receive an update on apprenticeships within the rural community of Swale from Kieren Mansfield (Economy and Community Services Manager, Swale Borough Council).

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

8. The Leader Programme 5 - 8

To receive information on the LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

9. World War I Commemorative Events and Activities

Lower Halstow Parish Council have requested this item.

Parish Councils and Swale Borough Council to provide updates on what they are doing to commemorate the Centenary of World War 1.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

10. Rural Business Opportunities 9 - 14

To consider the Rural Roundup.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

11. Parking Problems outside village schools and speeding in rural areas

To consider any action that can be taken to improve parking problems outside village schools and speeding in rural areas.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

12. Information Item - Market Survey and Analysis of the Irrigation Services Sector in Kent 15 - 18

To note the attached brief which sets out the aims and timetable for completion of the work on market survey and analysis of the irrigation services sector in Kent.

13. Venue for Next Meeting - Badlesmere Village Hall

The next meeting on Tuesday 18 November 2014 will be held at Badlesmere Village Hall.

Issued on Monday, 11 August 2014

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the Rural Forum please visit www.swale.gov.uk

**Democratic Services, 01795 417330, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

Apprenticeship Update – Rural Forum

Apprenticeship numbers in Swale 2013/14

As can be seen in the table below in the current academic (up to April 2014) apprenticeship numbers are generally down from the previous year. This said, the last quarter (to August 2014) should see a faster rate of take-up, with as it covers the period within which students in year 11 are looking at their options and employers choose to advertise apprenticeships.

Courtesy of an engaged business community and pro-active promotion of apprenticeships, Swale is performing better than virtually all districts in Kent, in terms of both absolute numbers and performance against last year's total.

	2012/13 Full Year	2013/14 August to April (provisional)	2013/14 to date as % of previous year's total
England	504,200	309,800	61.4
South East	68,960	42,990	62.3
Kent	11,600	6,570	56.6
Medway	2,870	1,760	61.3
Ashford	1,160	500	43.1
Canterbury	1,040	520	50.0
Dartford	730	480	65.8
Dover	970	600	61.9
Gravesham	800	460	57.5
Maidstone	1,180	680	57.6
Sevenoaks	690	350	50.7
Shepway	1,040	550	52.9
Swale	1,280	840	65.6
Thanet	1,400	840	60.0
Tonbridge and Malling	750	420	56.0
Tunbridge Wells	560	330	58.9

Apprenticeship reform

Background

In June 2012 the government asked entrepreneur Doug Richard to perform a review of the apprenticeship system. He was tasked with looking at how to build on the success of apprenticeships to:

He published his review in November 2012 and the government committed to implementing all of his principles in a new system. These included that:

- the testing and validation process should be independent and the apprentice should be tested at the end of their apprenticeship;
- all apprentices should have level 2 (GCSE equivalent) in English and maths before completing their apprenticeship; and
- purchasing power for investing in apprenticeships should lie with the employer with the price representing demand.

The reforms that are now being implemented are divided into two strands, funding and standards.

Employer Routed Funding

The government is completely reforming how apprenticeships are funded. In the current system the government pays a training provider to deliver an apprenticeship. The employer currently chooses their training provider but is only directly responsible for employing the apprentice and providing the apprentice with work experience and skills development. The training provider has dealt with all the administrative tasks, including ensuring the apprentice is eligible, whilst delivering the training and assessment for the apprentice.

Under the new system the employer will be required to purchase training and assessment for their apprentices from registered training providers. The government will part-fund these costs but the employer will be required to make a cash contribution, unlike in the current system. Once an employer has selected providers to deliver training and assessment, which are separate, they will need to negotiate a cost and a payment plan with the provider.

Once the employer has registered the apprentice on a government system, to check eligibility, they will be able to claim the government contribution. This will either be through the PAYE system or through Apprenticeship Credits, which will involve direct payment into a dedicated apprenticeship account. The final announcement as to the preferred system is awaited.

Apprenticeship Standards and Trailblazers

The parallel to funding reforms, the Government expressed a wish to improve standards in apprenticeships, setting out a new set of standards, scrapping some frameworks and asking employers to take a lead in the design of courses. To begin the reforms the government tasked eight occupational areas to be the first to undergo the changes. These are led by groups of employers titled Trailblazers. The Trailblazers have been leading on the design of training to meet the standards and designing an end-point assessment. Apprenticeships on these new standards are expected to start in 2014/15, with further standards to be designed for other occupational areas over the course of the next year.

The intention of these reforms is to:

- increase the quality of apprenticeships
- put employers in the driving seat
- simplify the apprenticeship system
- give employers purchasing powers.

They do, however, place a greater burden upon employers, both financially and administratively. There is a concern that this may act as a disincentive, particularly to SME's. With the introduction of an employer fee, even for 16-18 year olds, that are currently fully funded, this may result in employers looking to recruit older apprentices.

The Government is currently seeking to finalise the model it wishes to implement, post-consultation, and we await the release of further detail.

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The Leader Programme 2014-2020

Background and Context

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) LEADER Programme is a European Union rural funding approach, with grant funds available from January 2015 to December 2020.

Leader monies can be used on local issues, identified by people living in those areas. The community-led identification of local issues leads to delivery of local projects based on economic, social, environmental and land based sector needs from within the LEADER area.

Funding decisions are made by the Local Action Group (LAG) for the LEADER area. The LAG is made up of local private, public and strategic groups. Each LAG develops a Local Development Strategy (LDS) for its area and this describes what the LAG aims to achieve based on locally identified priorities and actions. The LAG has delegated powers to bring forward, assess and fund projects that meet their LDS objectives and which address local priorities in an innovative, inclusive and locally specific way through planning and implementing their LDS.

Under the last RDPE 2007-2013 Kent was covered by two LEADER areas – West Kent Leader and Kent Downs and Marshes Leader. Both were successful over the life of the programme providing support for 116 projects with a total investment of £7.65m, creating 83 jobs, safeguarding 377 jobs as well as supporting over 500 rural businesses plus 14 start-ups.

Funding under LEADER is available to rural business, farmers, foresters, growers, landowners, environmental organisations, cultural, heritage and community providers as well as voluntary and charitable organisations to develop projects that will assist, strengthen and develop themselves and their local area.

In this development or transition phase of the RDPE LEADER programme, 86 potential bids have been identified nationally and this will be reduced to 70 and the process of elimination will be based on the strength of Local Development Strategies and those which clearly respond to the emerging key programme priority which is to increase **jobs and growth**.

The new RDPE LEADER Programme for Kent 2014-2020

Former programme LEADER areas West Kent Leader and Kent Downs and Marshes Leader will be joined by a new East Kent Leader and all are currently preparing their respective Local Development Strategies for funding under the new 2014-2020 Programme. Each LEADER area is restricted to a maximum rural population of 150,000 people and in establishing maximum geographical coverage and acknowledging economic cohesion it should be noted that the administrative area of Swale has been split between two of the three proposed LEADER areas. The advantage of this approach to Swale is that it gives maximum coverage but the disadvantage is that maximum coverage may not be achieved if one of the bids which include Swale fails.

West Kent Leader will cover the rural areas of Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and part of rural Gravesham.

Kent Downs and Marshes Leader will cover the rural areas of Ashford, Maidstone, Medway, Swale (west of Faversham) and the Romney Marshes.

East Kent Leader will cover the rural areas of Thanet, Canterbury, Dover, Swale (East of and including Faversham) and Shepway (north of the Romney marshes).

The three LEADER areas in Kent based on economic coherence (rather than administrative boundaries) will be bidding for over £5m of EU and Defra funding to be used to support rural and land based businesses and local communities. Success will be determined on coherence and evidence-based Local Development Strategies that address local issues and opportunities and respond to the key priority around jobs and growth. If all three bids are successful then almost 97% of rural Kent will be able to benefit from LEADER funding from January 2015 but this is a competitive process and there are inevitably inherent risks in the strategic approach proposed. Defra are seeking efficiencies or economies of scale and whilst there will be two LAG's established for Kent Downs and Marshes and East Kent it is proposed that they will share an administrative team.

Within the new LEADER, Defra has included four new hub towns or 'service centres' with their populations contributing towards the population count – Sheerness, Minster, Faversham and Sevenoaks. The hubs are seen as catalysts or drivers of economic activity supporting the core LEADER agenda around jobs and growth in rural areas and whilst not bringing additional funding to the LEADER area, applicants from within the hub towns will also be eligible to benefit from grant support (see attached map).

Local Development Strategy (LDS)

The emphasis within each strategy will be on providing Jobs and Growth. This is a requirement set down by Defra and each LAG will deliver 70% of project funding directly in support of jobs and growth in the rural economy using the six priorities for the new RDPE LEADER Programme for Kent 2014-2020 which are:

- Support for increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activity
- Support for increasing forestry production

The LDS for each LEADER area must be submitted by 5 September and a decision will be made on awarding funds to the successful LEADER areas by early November. The successful LEADER groups will be able to work up and assess projects for support and provide funds from January 2015. As with all evolving funding programmes there will be further guidance available as the launch date nears.

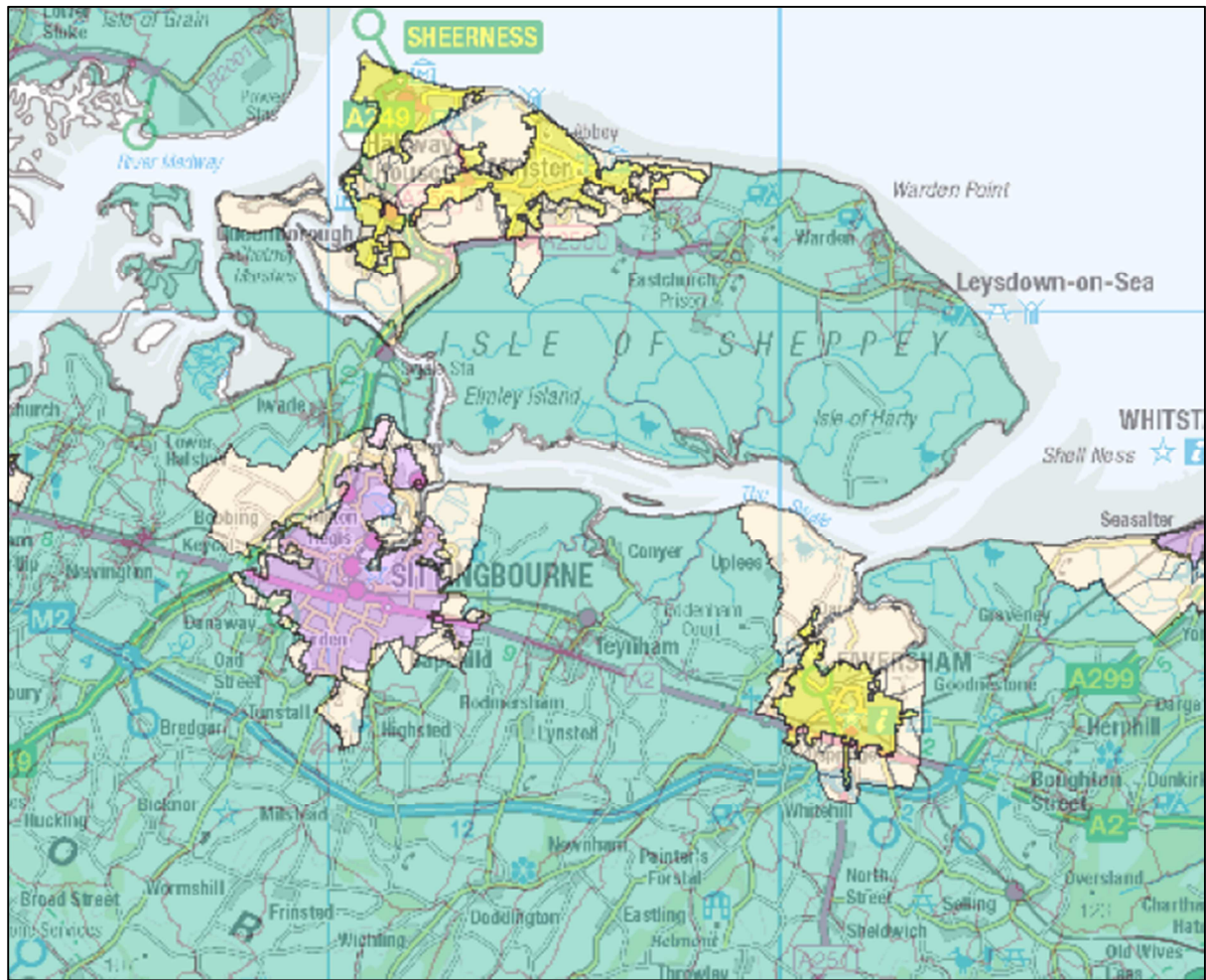
There is currently a call-out for project ideas and to business and organisations who feel they can help shape the emerging strategies or wish to become part of the LAG in the local LEADER area. Further information can be obtained from the Programme Managers in the proposed LEADER areas:

Kent Downs and Marshes LEADER: huw.jarvis@kent.gov.uk (tel: 01622 696940)
East Kent LEADER: keith.harrison@ruralkent.org.uk (tel: 01303 813790)

Lyn Newton
ECS Manager (Culture and Places)

Kieren Mansfield
ECS manager (Economic Development)

Appendix I: Leader Eligibility Map



Key

	Rural Area (eligible)
	Non-built up part of urban area (eligible)
	Designated hub town (urban, population 10k to 30k) [eligible]
	Remaining built-up areas (urban, >10k population) [not eligible]

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*You'll remember me when the west wind moves
Upon the fields of barley – Sting*

Let us know what you think, email us at edu@swale.gov.uk



Recent research conducted by The Prince's Countryside Fund for National Countryside Week (from July 14 to 16) reveals that a significant number of people undervalue the contribution and worth of the British countryside.

Rural and “opportunity” are words not often associated together, but with 5.5 million people employed in the rural economy, and domestic food and drink contributing £22 billion to the UK economy, The Prince's Countryside Fund says it's time to rethink how we view the value of the countryside.

Britain is more reliant on food imports than at any stage over the last 40 years. Official statistics on Britain's self-sufficiency—the measure of how much food eaten in Britain is grown here - is just 58.9 per cent.

It comes as an increasing number of sheep and dairy farmers have abandoned the industry in recent years, with 60,000 new entrants needed to enter farming in the next decade to keep the industry at a similar level as it is today.

The Prince's Countryside Fund, which has given over £3.8 million in grants in the four years since its inception, was set up by HRH The Prince of Wales to provide support to the multitude of remarkable organisations and individuals working tirelessly to keep farmers farming and our rural communities alive.

To find out more about the Princes Countryside Fund, visit their website www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk



Road accidents involving farm machinery increase by about 60% at harvest time, new figures show.

As harvest gets under way, rural insurer NFU Mutual is urging motorists to take care on rural roads and resist overtaking farm vehicles to avoid accidents. Rural roads are generally three times more dangerous than urban roads, according to research by Roadsafes.com

But this risk is increased further during harvest time when tractors are more active on roads and often travelling at lower speeds, turning in and out of fields. Last year, NFU Mutual dealt with 1,200 claims from July to September relating to road accidents involving farm machinery, with the most common type of accident involving a tractor or tractor and trailer turning right across a road into a field and colliding with a car or van driver who is overtaking a line of traffic in front.

NFU Mutual motor insurance specialist Victoria Walton said: "On average we see a 60% increase in third-party accidents involving tractors during harvest time compared to other months of the year. Accidents often occur when tractors slow down before turning right and impatient drivers try to overtake without realising the tractor is about to move across the road, or that another car is coming towards them. Our claims data reveals that one-third of serious accidents involved one party turning right."

Six tips to prevent road accidents during harvest

- Ensure tractor lights and flashing beacons are switched on and working
- Place indicator lights on top of tractor cab and trailer tailgate
- Clean residue off lights and check daily
- Make sure drivers, especially casuals, are aware of road risks
- Ensure tractor's mirrors are correctly set up and clean
- Consider putting a sign on roadside verge 200 yards before field – "Caution tractors turning right"

Original Article from Farmers Weekly – www.fwi.co.uk



Farmers Weekly have reported recently about an American farmer who lost his phone and was reunited with it - via Japan nine months later.

The phone, containing beloved photos of his family, was dropped by the Oklahoma farmer into a grain bin while he was working last October.

The phone disappeared into the grain store and from there was loaded with the grain into a truck and off to a grain facility in another part of Oklahoma. From there, it sailed down the Arkansas River in a barge and was then shipped to Japan among with 2m bushels of grain sorghum.

Then at the beginning of July, the farmer received a phone call from a kindly grain worker in Japan who had found the phone and wanted to return it to him and, finally, phone and farmer were reunited.

So Farmers Weekly are looking to find some more farm phone stories, be it strange, hilarious or heart-warming. You can comment on the bottom of the original article (<http://www.fwi.co.uk/articles/07/07/2014/145421/amazing-and-heart-warming-story-of-a-farmer39s-lost.htm>) or you can tweet your story to @farmersweekly.



With the abundance of food and drink produced in the borough, August will be a bumper month for various festivals and celebrations showcasing the wonderful produce grown here in Swale. If you want to see what's on near you, don't forget to check out www.visit-swale.co.uk/whats-on for full event listings.

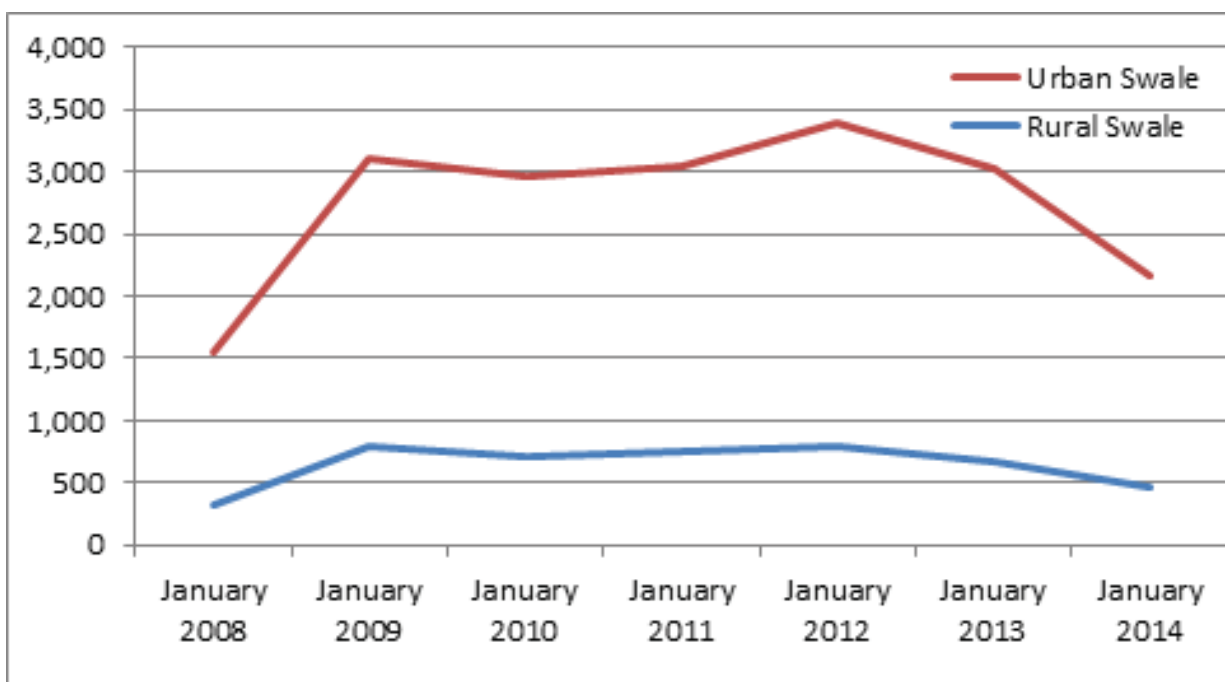


Central Government has issued its latest quarterly rural economic report. The bulletin is a 'dashboard' of indicators presenting a range of statistics, designed to provide evidence of the effects of the economic changes in rural areas.

This latest report gives an overview of the modest upturn in the UK's rural areas from January to March 2014.

Whilst access to similar data at the more local level, to reflect the position in rural Swale can be limited, we will look to bring some of what is available to future bulletins. As a 'starter for 10' the graph below shows the relative position in rural and urban Swale in terms of the numbers of people claiming jobseekers allowance.

Claimant Count





In England 9.3 million people (18% of the population) live in rural areas; 43.7 million (82%) live in urban areas.

Below is a selection of economic indicators on aspects of the rural economy for January to March (Quarter 1 / Q1) in 2014, compared with October to December (Quarter 4 / Q4) in 2013, and overleaf annual change.

- Rural house prices up in Q1**
(average sale price of properties)

Rural areas: £266,500 (0.3% higher than in Q4)
Urban areas: £252,100 (1.8% higher than in Q4)

- Rural unemployment rate down in Q1**

Rural areas: 4.2% (down from 4.6% in Q4)
Urban areas: 7.3% (down from 7.6% in Q4)

- Rural claimant count unchanged in Q1**
(% of working age population claiming unemployment benefits)

Rural areas: 1.4% (the same as in Q4)
Urban areas: 3.2% (down from 3.3% in Q4)

- Rural redundancies up in Q1**
(Redundancies per 1,000 workers)

Rural areas: 4.3 (up from 3.1 in Q4)
Urban areas: 5.2 (up from 4.6 in Q4)

- Rural business insolvencies unchanged in Q1**
(insolvencies per 1,000 businesses)

Rural areas: 0.7 (the same as in Q4)
Urban areas: 0.8 (the same as in Q4)

*If printed this can be folded along the dotted lines
into three to form a leaflet*

House prices (annual change)

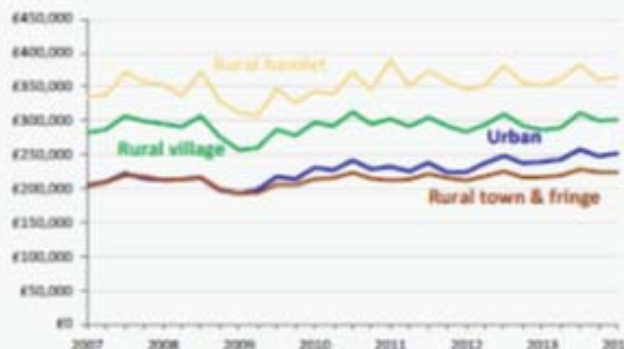
Average house prices, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Type of area	Average sale price		
	Q1/2013	Q1/2014	change ¹
Urban	£239,300	£252,100	5.3%
Rural	£255,500	£266,500	4.3%
Rural town & fringe	£217,000	£223,900	3.2%
Rural village	£286,700	£301,500	5.2%
Rural hamlet	£352,000	£365,300	3.8%
England	£242,200	£254,700	5.1%

¹ data covers the transactions received at Land Registry, change is calculated using unrounded figures whereas prices are shown rounded to the nearest £100.
Source: Land Registry © Crown copyright 2013, Price Paid Data / Delta

- Between Q1/2013 and Q1/2014 the average rural house sale price increased by 4.3%; the average urban house sale price increased by 5.3%.

Average house prices, Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: Land Registry © Crown copyright 2013, Price Paid Data / Delta

- Average prices in *rural hamlets* and *rural villages* have been consistently above the average found in urban areas (by 45% and 20% in Q1/2014 respectively).
- Since 2009, average house prices in *rural town & fringe* areas have been lower than the average found in urban areas (and were lower by 11% in Q1/2014).

Note: some figures are liable to revision in subsequent quarters and so comparisons with previous bulletins should be treated with caution. This is particularly the case for house prices, for which previous quarters may be revised significantly.

House prices and Business insolvencies sections: The Rural Urban Classification (RUC) 2001 has been applied to all data up to and including 2010 to distinguish rural and urban areas. From 2011 onwards the RUC2011 has been applied. Some areas will have changed categories between 2001 and 2011.

Economic activity (annual change)

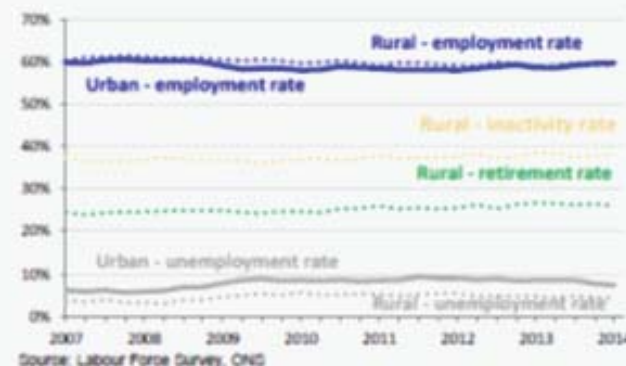
Economic activity, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Rate as % of people aged 16 & over	Urban		Rural	
	Q1 2013	Q1 2014	Q1 2013	Q1 2014
Employment ¹	58.6%	59.6%	58.4%	59.3%
Unemployment ²	8.5%	7.3%	4.8%	4.2%
Inactivity	36.0%	35.7%	38.7%	38.1%
Retired	19.0%	19.2%	26.7%	26.1%

¹ Employment rate is expressed as % of people aged 16 & over. It is not comparable with other publications where employment rate is shown as % of people aged 16 – 64.
² rate as % of people aged 16 & over who are economically active (in work or seeking work).
Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS. (Not seasonally adjusted.)

- In Q1/2014 those employed as percentage of people aged 16 & over in rural areas was 59.3%, an increase on Q1/2013, whilst in urban areas it had increased to 59.6%.
- The unemployment rate¹ in rural areas decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 4.2%, 3.1 percentage points lower than in urban areas.
- The inactivity rate (not in employment or unemployed) in rural areas decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 38.1 between Q1/2013 and Q1/2014, and is 2.4 percentage points higher than in urban areas.
- Within inactivity, the retirement rate decreased by 0.6 percentage points in rural areas, to 26.1%, whereas in urban areas it increased to 19.2% of people.

Economic activity percentage rates, Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

Claimant count (annual change)

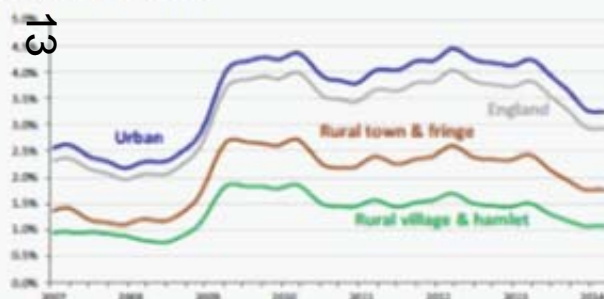
Claimant count as % of working age population, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Type of area	Q1/2013		Q1/2014		% pt change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Urban	1,182,500	4.3%	902,600	3.2%	-1.0%
Rural	119,600	2.0%	85,600	1.4%	-0.6%
Rural town & fringe	73,800	2.4%	53,200	1.8%	-0.7%
Rural village & hamlet	45,800	1.5%	32,500	1.1%	-0.4%
England	1,302,100	3.8%	988,200	2.9%	-0.9%

Source: ONS/Defra

- Between Q1/2013 and Q1/2014, the percentage of the working age population claiming unemployment-related benefits decreased by 0.6 percentage points in rural areas and by 1.0 percentage points in urban areas.

Claimant count (people claiming unemployment-related benefits) as % of working age population, Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: ONS/Defra

Areas forming settlements with populations of over 10,000 are urban, while the remainder are defined as rural town & fringe, village or hamlet & isolated dwellings.

For more information about the rural urban classification visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/rural-urban-definition>

Produced by Defra's Rural Statistics Unit: rural.statistics@defra.gov.uk (telephone 01904 455407).

Comments on the content and format would be welcome.

Published on 12 June 2014

Redundancies (annual change)

Number of redundancies & rates, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Type of area	Q1/2013		Q1/2014	
	Number	Rate ¹ per 1,000 workers	Number	Rate ¹ per 1,000 workers
Urban	99,000	5.8	91,000	5.2
Rural	23,000	6.0	16,000	4.3
England	122,000	5.8	107,000	5.1

¹ ratio of the number of workers made redundant for the given quarter to the number of employees in the previous quarter multiplied by 1,000, based on location of residence rather than workplace

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

- In Q1/2014 16,000 people living in rural areas were made redundant, 7,000 fewer than a year earlier in Q1/2013.
- The redundancy rate in rural areas decreased from 6.0 redundancies per 1,000 workers in Q1/2013 to 4.3 in Q1/2014, whilst the redundancy rate in urban areas decreased from 5.8 to 5.2.

Redundancies in each industry, Q1/2014

Industry	Urban		Rural	
	Number	Rate ¹ per 1,000 workers	Number	Rate ¹ per 1,000 workers
Agriculture, Fishing, Energy & Water	3,000	13.6	*	*
Manufacturing industries	15,000	7.7	3,000	7.1
Construction	8,000	10.1	3,000	12.9
Distribution, Hotels & Restaurants	23,000	6.6	2,000	2.8
Transport & Communication	5,000	4.2	*	*
Finance & Business services	17,000	5.2	*	*
Education, Health & Public Admin	16,000	2.8	4,000	3.3
Other services	4,000	3.9	*	*
All industries	91,000	5.2	16,000	4.3

¹ ratio of the number of workers made redundant for the given quarter to the number of employees in the previous quarter multiplied by 1,000, based on location of residence rather than workplace

* data suppressed to prevent disclosure.

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

- In Q1/2014, the highest redundancy rate for people living in rural areas was in the Construction sector, with 12.9 per 1,000 workers, followed by 7.1 in Manufacturing industries.

Redundancy rate per 1,000 employees, Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

Business insolvencies (annual change)

Business insolvencies per 1,000 businesses, Q1/2013 & Q1/2014

Type of area	Q1/2013	Q1/2014
Urban	0.8	0.8
Rural	0.7	0.7
Rural town & fringe	0.7	0.7
Rural village	0.6	0.7
Rural hamlet	0.7	0.6
England	0.8	0.8

Source: pH Group/Defra

- In Q1/2014 the insolvencies rate per 1,000 businesses remained unchanged in both rural and urban areas compared with Q4/2013.

Insolvencies rate per 1,000 businesses (smoothed quarterly average), Q1/2007 to Q1/2014



Source: pH Group/Defra

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Request for Quotes: Market Survey and Analysis of the Irrigation Services Sector in Kent

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this work is to assist Kent County Council (KCC) in understanding the economic opportunities and barriers for the irrigation and farm water management sector in Kent. The work responds to keen interest from local farmers and growers in irrigation and water management technology and practices and it supports KCC work on food security and water resilience.

Earlier work has identified that water availability for irrigation is a significant long term risk for Kent¹ that will impact on the economy and future food security. The Kent Rural Board has set up a Task Group to address this issue. Key objectives set by that group are to 'optimise food output per unit of water' and enable 'secure and resilient water supplies' for the industry. In achieving these objectives there may be significant opportunities for local businesses in the irrigation and water management sector.

The funding for this work is being provided through FUSION which is an EU Interreg IVA 2 Seas Programme Project and part funded by the European Regional Development Fund. The FUSION Project aims to increase economic growth in the 2 Seas region while reducing the environmental impact by promoting an eco-innovative mindset in SMEs from start-up to high growth. Kent is the lead partner for the project and has a particular interest in supporting the development of new sustainable business models in Kent and the expansion of the low carbon, environmental technologies sector through developing effective strategies and policies and targeted business support packages. This work will assist the County Council in delivering this aim.

2.0 Background

Irrigated agriculture employs more than 50,000 people in the UK, it contributes significantly to the rural economy and supports the UK food security. With one of the highest concentrations of horticultural production in the country, irrigation is particularly important for the Kent rural economy. However, Kent is also one of the driest counties in the UK and, with a relatively high density of population, Kent water supplies are under increasing pressure.

The agricultural and horticultural sector relies heavily on licensed abstractions from rivers and aquifers for its irrigation water. Most of the Kent river catchments are classified by the Environment Agency as 'over abstracted' or 'over licensed', and in most years summer abstractions are either not permitted or are severely restricted. As a result, a lack of available water for irrigation already poses a significant threat to Kent food production. In an online survey of water usage amongst Kent

¹ <https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/environment-and-planning/environment-and-climate-change/water%20summit/WRF%20Analysis%20of%20Risks%20and%20Opportunities.pdf>

members of LEAF UK conducted for KCC in 2012, approximately 50% of the growers interviewed indicated that water shortages had negatively impacted their business during the last five years. The same study also highlighted that climate change is expected to significantly increase crop water demand and summer river flows are expected to dramatically reduce but mean winter river flows may increase. It found that some of these changes have already taken place and that many Kent growers are responding by planning new water storage reservoirs.

A separate piece of work with partner organisations is further investigating farm water management practices in the SE and has already identified a keen interest in improved irrigation technology and practices. Once completed, it is intended to bring irrigators together with the equipment and service providers within an event focussed on enhanced water use efficiency.

3.0 Objectives

The aim of this work is to develop a clear understanding of the potential opportunities for the irrigation and water management business sector and any barriers to the realisation of these opportunities. Whilst the primary focus is on Kent, it is recognised that many of the businesses concerned are currently based elsewhere.

To achieve this KCC requires a survey of businesses within the sector to identify and report on:

- The economic scale, characteristics and trends within the sector that serves Kent, paying specific attention to local businesses and providing a breakdown of business types.
- UK companies that have a particular interest in the Kent market and might be interested to exhibit at local events.
- The future local economic opportunities, potential barriers, and any information, advice and support requirements needed to support growth within the sector in Kent.
- Characteristics of the supply chain and any opportunities this might present for Kent companies; including an assessment of these organisations awareness to circular economy i.e. cradle to cradle models; business resilience and the like.

It is anticipated that the survey would involve some combination of person-to-person and telephone / email interviews.

3.1 Business sectors of interest

The businesses that are of interest within this work include:

- Manufacturers, suppliers and distributors of irrigation equipment (in particular equipment that has the potential to help improve water use efficiency);
- Design engineers, construction contractors and equipment providers for farm reservoirs and associated pipelines and pumping systems;
- Manufacturers and suppliers of agricultural rainwater harvesting systems and similar alternative supply solutions;
- Manufacturers and suppliers of soil moisture and crop monitoring systems, irrigation scheduling and control systems and services;

- Businesses providing irrigation and water management consultancy;
- Businesses providing relevant surveying services, advice and support with planning applications, and similar services.

4.0 Outputs

- Draft survey questionnaire
- Tested, final survey questionnaire
- Categorised database of businesses (location and business type)
- A target of 25 completed questionnaires across a range of businesses categories
- Database of survey results
- Summary tables and charts of findings
- Project report including an Executive Summary
- Set of PowerPoint slides and speaker notes summarising the work and the key findings

5.0 Value of work

We invite quotes for this work; however it is important to note that value for money will be a key criterion for assessment. A payment of one third of the fee will be made upon entering into a contract to provide the study, with the remainder payable upon completion.

6.0 Client

The Client for this work is Kent County Council (KCC)

7.0 Contract Terms and Conditions

The successful contractor will be bound by the Council’s standard terms and conditions. These are available on request.

8.0 Timetable

The following timetable applies:

Invitation to quote:	26 th February 2014
Closing date for receipt of quotes:	14 th March 2014
Selection of contractor:	28 th March 2014
Inception meeting:	W/c 7 th April 2014
Identification of businesses, survey design and implementation:	April to June 2014
Data analysis and reporting:	June-July 2014
Draft report:	31 st July 2014
Comments from Client:	15 th of August 2014
Final report:	29 th of August 2014
Final payment:	15 th of September 2014

9.0 Quotation requirements

Quotes for this work will include:

- a) Brief work plan on how the work will be done in accordance with the objectives and the timetable;
- b) Details and examples, no more than three, of previous projects that can demonstrate:
 - In-depth understanding of the irrigation and water management sector;
 - Excellent knowledge of relevant UK and Kent business and/or sources of information on this;
 - A track record in designing and conducting questionnaire surveys and analysis and interpretation of results;
 - Excellent report writing skills.
- c) Demonstrable evidence of project team experience; a maximum of two pages.
- d) A breakdown of costs including day rates of project team (costs excluding VAT)

10.0 Evaluation criteria

We will evaluate the quotation according to:

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Quality of the work plan	25%
Expertise and experience	20%
Capacity and capability	15%
Value for money	30%
Compliance with timescales	10%

11.0 Submission and contact

Please submit quotes electronically, MS Word or PDF, by 5pm on the 14th of March 2014 to alan.turner@kent.gov.uk.

The lead contact for this work will be:

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Dated: 24th February 2014