

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD

26 July 2011

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 WEST KENT LEADER PROGRAMME – UPDATE

To receive an update on the West Kent Leader Programme and its role in supporting the rural economy of the Borough.

1.1 **Background**

- 1.1.1 The West Kent Leader Programme is a grant scheme which provides financial support for rural businesses. The particular focus is assisting local farming and forestry operations with diversification projects and adding value to their existing operations. Funding for the programme comes from EU sources under the auspices of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). This programme was originally administered on a regional basis by SEEDA. However, with the abolition of that body, RDPE responsibilities are now being transferred to DEFRA.
- 1.1.2 The West Kent Leader Programme resulted from a successful bid submitted by the West Kent Partnership in 2007. This resulted in an award of some £1.8M over the period of the programme, 2008 – 2013. The accountable body for the West Kent programme is Sevenoaks District Council. Bids to the programme are submitted to the accountable body which are assessed by a Programme Manager, Caroline Lingham, appointed to administer the fund for West Kent. Decisions on grant support are made by an independent Local Action Group (LAG) who meet every two months or so to make decisions on the bids received.
- 1.1.3 Caroline Lingham will be attending the meeting to give a further update on the progress of the Leader programme. In particular, she will focus on:
- Overall volume of bids and investment made by the Programme to date
 - Local projects which have been supported by the programme
 - Transitional issues and the role of DEFRA
 - Likely future funding of the Programme.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive