

RURAL NEWS DIGEST #6

August 2009

Welcome to the latest Leicestershire Rural Partnership Rural News Digest.

National

- **Rural Services Network – Towards a Rural Manifesto**

The Rural Services Network has started the development of its rural manifesto ahead of the forthcoming general election. Ten key areas of concern have been identified, these being: rural proofing, the rural economy after the recession, supporting rural communities, central government funding formulae, safeguarding small rural schools, affordable rural housing, healthcare in the countryside, rural transport and safer roads, digital Britain in the countryside, and fuel poverty in the countryside. Consultation on this paper closes on 30 September 2009 and the final manifesto will be published in November 2009.

<http://www.rsonline.org.uk/images/files/towardsaruralmanifestofinal27july2009.pdf>

- **Countryside Alliance – Rural Manifesto**

The Countryside Alliance has launched its rural manifesto which identifies five key topics that will be the focus of its campaigning up to the general election. These are: housing, transport, rural services, farming and country pursuits including, of course the repeal of the Hunting Act.

<http://www.countryside-alliance.org.uk/our-news-and-comment/views-and-comment/the-rural-manifesto-%11-campaigning-for-change/>

- **Conservative Party – Rural Action: A Conservative Agenda for Rural Communities**

This document sets out the approach that a future Conservative Government would take in respect of rural communities. This agenda is split into main four headings: respect rural people, power to rural communities, protect rural services, revive the rural economy. Core elements include the reversal of centralisation, recognition of the increased cost of rural service delivery, and for social value to be built into each central government decision that affects local communities.

<http://www.conservativeruralaction.com/>

- **Rural Money Matters: A support guide to rural financial inclusion (CRC)**

People in rural areas experience the same financial challenges as people living in towns and cities. But living in a rural area brings additional challenges. Like poverty, financial exclusion is less visible in rural areas compared to urban areas. This guide is designed to help local authorities and their local strategic partnership members understand, identify and tackle financial exclusion in rural areas. The full document can be found at

<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/RuralMoneyMatters%20TAGGED.pdf>

- **Mind the Gap: Digital England - a rural perspective (CRC)**

'Mind the Gap: Digital England - a rural perspective' is the rural contribution to Lord Carter's [Digital Britain](#) report. Among other issues, the report highlights the importance of broadband to rural communities. Broadband internet is now considered to be the 'fourth utility'. However, lack of broadband provision or poor speeds mean that many rural areas risk being left further behind as Next Generation Broadband is rolled out, unless solutions can be found. Full report can be found at

<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/CRC104%20Digital%20Inclusion%20Report.pdf>

- **Working together for older people in rural areas (Cabinet Office's Social Exclusion Task Force)**

Published alongside the government's strategy on ageing, 'Working Together for Older People in Rural Areas' is the final report of a joint project between the Social Exclusion Task Force and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This report examines evidence on the social exclusion experienced by older people in rural areas and identifies examples of innovative service delivery that can make a real difference in these areas. As a result of this study, a number of key practical policy actions have been integrated into the government's Ageing Strategy '[Building a Society for all Ages](#)' [External website].

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/short_studies/working_together.aspx

- **Consultation paper on PPS4: Planning for Prosperous Economies (CLG)**

This recent consultation paper sought views on combining all national planning policy on economic development in urban and rural areas and town centres into one consolidated and streamlined Planning Policy Statement (PPS). Part 4 of the consultation paper set out a number of questions to which responses were sought.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/consultationeconomicpps>

The CRC's response can be found at

<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/90723%20PPS4%20submission.pdf>

- **Rural Proofing Toolkit (CRC)**

[Rural Proofing](#) is shorthand for a process that involves assessing how policies will work for rural people and places and, so, ensure that the policies are implemented fairly and effectively. This [Rural Proofing](#) toolkit includes guidance and case studies to help to ensure domestic policies take account of rural circumstances and needs. It's designed to be used alongside other appraisal systems, including [Sustainable Development Action Plans](#) and the formal [Impact Assessment](#) process within Government. The Toolkit can be found at

<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/rural%20proofing%20toolkit.pdf>.

- **Toolkit for Sustainable Rural Communities**

The toolkit has been designed for use in rural towns and villages – essentially in smaller settlements of under 10,000 population. The toolkit has been developed to help local planning authorities, local partnerships and public service providers improve their local evidence base and develop their understanding of the towns and villages within their territory. It can assist local planning authorities in the preparation of their Local Development Framework, and Local Strategic Partnerships in preparation of Sustainable Community Strategies. The involvement of local communities is integral to the successful completion of the toolkit. Communities can also use the toolkit independently if they wish – either individually or as groups - perhaps to help develop a community plan, or to assess the likely impact of any proposed change or new policies to their place.

<http://www.ruraltoolkit.org.uk/>

- **Migration and Rural Economies: Assessing and addressing risks (IPPR)**

This paper examines the implications of increasing migration to rural areas, looking in particular at the economics of this phenomenon. Topics explored include the roles migrants are playing, the economic impacts of migration on existing populations and businesses, and what future migratory trends might be. Particular consideration is given as to whether recent migration to rural Britain has led to any risks for rural economies; and if so, how these risks can be managed.

<http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=670>

- **BERR's oversight of the Post Office Network Change Programme (National Audit Office)**

The report explains why the post office closure programme was proposed, and BERR's oversight of the development of the programme. The report then evaluates: the effectiveness in practice of the protections for users given when the programme was announced; and BERR's ongoing monitoring of the programme.

http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/the_post_office_network_change.aspx

- **Connecting Communities Expanding Access to the Rail Network (Association of Train Operating Companies)**

Opportunities for future rail connections serving a million people with 14 new lines and up to 40 new stations have been identified in a new report by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC). In the report, Connecting Communities, ATOC calls for the routes involved to be safeguarded, and for further detailed planning with Network Rail and local authorities to prioritise investment.

<http://www.atoc-comms.org/dynamic/atoc-press-story/997911/RAIL-REPORT-MAKES-CASE-FOR-CONSIDERING-NEW-COMMUNITY-LINKS>

http://www.atoc.org/general/ConnectingCommunitiesReport_S10.pdf

- **Digital Britain (BIS)**

The Government has published The Digital Britain Report. This is the strategic vision for ensuring that the UK is at the leading edge of the global digital economy. The report provides actions and recommendations to promote and protect talent and innovation in our creative industries, to modernise TV and radio frameworks and support local news, and introduces policies to maximise the social and economic benefits from digital technologies.

<http://www.dcms.gov.uk/images/publications/digitalbritain-finalreport-jun09.pdf>

- **Dairy Farmers of Britain: enquiry announced (DEFRA Committee)**

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee has decided to examine the implications of the collapse of Dairy Farmers of Britain (DFB). The Committee will consider in particular:

- the impact of the collapse of DFB on dairy farmers and the industry;
- the governance and accountability structures of DFB;
- Defra's response to the collapse of DFB; and
- the causes and lessons to be learned from the collapse of DFB.

The Committee does not intend to consider the issues surrounding the receivership of the cooperative that are expected to be covered in the report by PricewaterhouseCoopers. The Committee invites all interested parties to address these matters in writing by Monday 31 August. Further submissions, after the meeting held by the receivers on 7 September, will be considered. A programme of oral evidence will be announced in due course. More information available at

http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/environment_food_and_rural_affairs/efra_pn30_090722.cfm

- **Securing food supplies up to 2050: the challenges faced by the UK (EFRA Committee)**

Defra has set out its vision for the UK food system. This centres on the security of the UK's food supply in the long-term. Producing sufficient food is only part of the challenge: how food is produced is equally important. The Committee notes that increases in production will have to take place in the context of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the food system, reducing reliance on fossil fuel-derived inputs, and conserving soil and water. The report does not advocate food self-sufficiency for the UK and emphasises the importance of strong trading relationships with a variety of countries. The report also calls for an urgent increase in spending on public-sector food and farming research.

Volume I <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmenvfru/213/213i.pdf>

Volume II <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmenvfru/213/213ii.pdf>

- **Rural Economies Recession Intelligence (Commission for Rural Communities)**

The CRC have published further rural economy intelligence reports. These include the latest report on Market Towns which references evidence from Leicestershire. These are being used to brief the Secretary of State feeding into the National Economic Council. Reports include;

- [1: Recession impacts on the economies and communities of rural England](#)
- [2: The rural housing market](#)
- [3: Business performance](#)
- [4: Employment and the rural labour market](#)
- [5: Rural housing](#)
- [6: Financial inclusion](#)
- [7. Rural labour markets](#)
- [8. Our latest report looking at Market Towns](#)

- **Post offices - securing their future (BERR Committee)**

The report emphasises the value attached to the post office network by the public, identifies services that should be provided through it and calls in particular on all government departments to recognise its potential in delivering a range of services.

The Committee found no shortage of services the post office network could and should offer, dividing them into five categories: mail services, financial services, local government services, central government services and broader community services. It offers specific ideas for new services in these five areas. The Committee believes that social exclusion and isolation can often best be countered by encouraging face-to-face services. It is particularly critical of the proposal set out in the Digital Britain report for a Digital Switchover of Public Services, in which the internet would be the primary means of access to public services, rather than one of many.

Volume I <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmberr/371/371i.pdf>

Volume II <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmberr/371/371ii.pdf>

- **Intergenerational succession in English Farming (Matt Lobley, University of Exeter)**

This study concentrates on the degree to which farms are inherited, and the impact that the succession process has upon farming operations. One survey found that 8% of farmers were new entrants. Farms lacking a successor may be gradually wound down and de-capitalised to produce an easier life and funds for retirement. Having a successor can act as a trigger for business development. There is not much evidence to support concerns about the sustainability of family farming – one survey showed that only 5% of farmers who expected to leave farming in the near future had not identified a successor. The succession question then is mainly about achieving a

better balance between the valuable contribution of farming families and the benefits of the “new blood” effect of new entrants.

To obtain a copy of the full paper, please contact Matt Lobley at M.Lobley@exeter.ac.uk

A presentation on this subject can be downloaded at

<http://centres.exeter.ac.uk/crpr/news/Matt%20Lobley%20Denver%202009.pdf>

- **The global pipeline of new GM crops (EC Joint Research Centre)**

This study compiles an overview of the current global pipeline of new GM crops and discusses the potential economic and trade impact of the emergence of new GM crops that are not approved in the EU. The pipeline of new GM crops is also intended to serve as basis for further analyses in the field.

The commercialisation of new genetically modified (GM) crops generally is a regulated activity worldwide. Different countries have different authorisation procedures, and, even if submitted at the same time, new GM crops do not get approval simultaneously in all countries.

This issue, known as "asynchronous approval" of GM crops, is of growing concern for its potential economic impact on international trade. Because if the importing country operates a "zero tolerance" policy, imports may be rejected if containing traces of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) that are not yet authorised. While currently there are around 30 commercial GM products that are cultivated worldwide, the forecast is that by 2015 there will be over 120.

http://www.appg-agscience.org.uk/linkedfiles/JRCreport_GMOpipeline_online_preprint.pdf

Regional

- **Working positively with rural estates. The scale and nature of rural estates and their contribution to the East Midlands (EMDA)**

This piece of research published by East Midlands Development Agency (emda) confirms that rural estates are making a significant contribution to the region's economy by either directly employing or providing accommodation for over 18,000 jobs across a range of business areas. According to the research, there are almost 300 rural estates which account for nearly a quarter (23%) of the region's land area. They collectively own a wide range of assets including agricultural land, houses, workspace and community facilities. Over 70% are privately owned, 20% are owned by institutions or charities, with less than 10% falling under local authority or other public sector ownership. The research identifies the importance of these estates to their local communities and also identifies a number of barriers which prevent estates from either growing as they would like or developing their assets.

http://www.emda.org.uk/uploaddocuments/emda_Rural_Estates.pdf

- **East Midlands Rural Action Plan (EMRAF)**

The East Midlands Rural Action Plan Review Consultation Draft was launched at the EMRAF conference on Friday 26th June. The consultation document is now available to download on the EMRAF website www.ruralaffairs.org.uk and is located in the News section of the Knowledge Network. Responses should be returned by 31 August 2009 either by e-mail to Angie Essom aessom@rcan.org.uk or by post to EMRAF, c/o Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire, Newstead Centre, Tilford Road, Newstead Village, Nottinghamshire NG15 0BS.

See <http://www.ruralaffairs.org.uk/rap.php> for further details.

Leicestershire

- **Leicestershire Rural Partnership Annual Report 2009 (LRP)**

A pdf version of our latest Annual Report is now available

<http://www.oakleaves.org.uk/uploads/354a40ec9e2ee72918787954.pdf>

If you would like hard copies of the report please e-mail: jclarkson@leics.gov.uk

Events

- **Leicestershire Rural Partnership's Bi-annual Conference 2009 (LRP)**

A big thank you to everyone who attended the LRP's 12th Bi-annual rural conference in June. The event was a great success attended by 120 representatives from a variety of public, private and voluntary organisations. Congratulations to Martin Hening of Diseworth who won a hamper of local produce as part of our prize draw. Presentation slides from the event can be found at

www.oakleaves.org.uk/ruralconference

- **Action for Market Towns Convention – Melton Mowbray**

'Beyond the Recession' is the theme of this year's national convention in Melton Mowbray on 13 and 14 October. This year, AMT has joined with the Rural Services Network to plan a convention which will both look at practical steps which towns can take to get through the recession and prepare for the upturn, and also help the process of drafting a Rural Services Manifesto, which will be launched in November.

The Convention programme contains an exciting mix of study tours hosted by the local organisers in Melton Mowbray, and workshops on a variety of practical and policy themes. For more details of the convention programme and bookings details please see <http://towns.org.uk/2009/07/02/amt-convention/>

- **National Forest Wood Fair**

The Wood Fair will be taking place on Bank Holiday Monday 31 August from 10am to 5pm at Beacon Hill Country Park, Woodhouse Eaves. Amongst the attractions will be live demonstrations of woodworking skills, craft displays and chainsaw sculpting. There will be plenty for children including stories from the Wild Man of the Woods, birds of prey, craft activities, archery and a climbing wall. In the food area there will be the opportunity to sample a broad selection of locally produced food.

<http://www.nationalforest.org/forest/woodland/index.php?fuseaction=home.woodfair>

- **East Midlands Food and Drink Festival**

Held at Brooksby Hall on 3 and 4 October, the East Midlands Food and Drink Festival brings together a huge and fabulous selection of cheeses, breads, pies, game, beers, spices, juices, bison, chocolate, cider, wines, chutneys, sausages, cakes, ostrich, pancakes and much more from some of the country's finest producers, many from the East Midlands region. Experience a great range of live demonstrations in the Rangemaster Cookery Demonstration Theatre by names such as TV Chef Rachel Green, Master Butcher and member of the British BBQ team, Viv Harvey and

renowned pie-maker Stephen Hallam. Together with wine tastings, talks and book signings, places to stop to eat and drink, the Festival is just the perfect day out for everyone.

Organisers of the event, the Melton Mowbray Food Partnership, are proud that one of the key features this year will be 'value for money.' This year, it's even better value than ever to come – 30% cheaper than last year at just £5 for pre-booked tickets! Tickets can be booked online at www.goleicestershire.com. During the Festival tickets will be £6 on the door with children under 16 free. With over 200 stalls the East Midlands Food and Drink Festival is the largest regional celebration of British Food and Drink in the country. With Park and Ride available from Melton Mowbray the East Midlands Food and Drink Festival really is the place to shop 'til you drop!

- **Rural Economy Summit – Investment (CRC, emda)**

The CRC are hosting a series of regional summits considering different impacts of the recession on the rural economy. A future event, to cover the East and West Midlands, and focusing on investment has been arranged for 11 September 2009 at Dunchurch Park Hotel, near Rugby. More information is at

<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/events/releasingthepotentialofruraleconomiesinvestment>

- **East Midland Rural Affairs Forum – New Website (EMRAF)**

On the 27 July EMRAF launched their new website. See <http://www.ruralaffairs.org.uk>

Funding

- **Grassroots Grants Programme (Voluntary Action Leicester)**

Grants are available to community groups to support local activities in Leicestershire. Full details are available at <http://www.valonline.org.uk/news/2008/sep/grassroots-grants-programme>.

- **Yorkshire Bank 150th Community Awards**

To mark their 150th anniversary the Bank is inviting registered local charities, community and voluntary groups in the North of England and the Midlands to participate in their Community Awards for a share of £150,000. Yorkshire Bank has branches in Coalville, Hinckley and Leicester.

The Community Awards will focus on four areas which the Yorkshire Bank consider important for the health and wellbeing of communities, these include: environment, volunteering, education, regeneration. Completed application forms and supporting evidence needs to be submitted by 16 August 2009. Further details, including application forms are available at <http://www.ybonline.co.uk/about-yorkshire-bank/community-awards/>

Next issue of the Digest will be out in early **October 2009**.....best wishes until then.

If, in the meantime, you notice anything worth sharing please let me know.

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Interested in keeping up to date on issues affecting rural Leicestershire?

Please register with the Leicestershire Rural Partnership to receive updates at www.oakleaves.org.uk/register.html