

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SKILLS AND STRATEGIC  
TRANSPORT - CLLR FLEUR DE RHÉ-PHILIPPE**

**ECONOMY AND REGENERATION**

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**REFERENCE:** EST-001-13 Intention

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**APPROVAL OF THE RURAL ECONOMY GRANTS SCHEME**

**Purpose of Report**

A funding scheme to support rural businesses has been offered to the Council by Defra to be administered on behalf of the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The fund will total £1 million. Funds made by the Council will be made as grants and 'bankroll' the scheme. The Council will then reclaim funds from the funder, Defra by 31 March 2015.

**Background**

Defra has offered a Funding Agreement to Wiltshire Council for up to £1m of grant aid to distribute to expanding and start-up micro-businesses over the forthcoming period to 31 December 2014.

The scheme is funded under the Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013 (RPDE).

It will be available in rural Wiltshire and Swindon local authority areas, but not available to non-rural businesses. It is available to the areas due to the presence of the Swindon & Wiltshire Rural Growth Network pilot.

**Options Considered**

To:

- (i) Do nothing. If Wiltshire Council does not enter the funding scheme then £1 million of investment will be lost for local businesses.
- (ii) Administer the Rural Economy Grants scheme on behalf of the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership as proposed.

Officers consider that the benefits from administering such a scheme would ensure significant economic impetus in the rural economy.

The scheme would complement The Enterprise Network project which is providing incubation space for start up businesses.

**Reason for Decision**

Approval for the Council to enter such a funding scheme is required pursuant to Part 3A (Delegation of Executive Functions) of Wiltshire Council's Constitution.

**INTENTION TO MAKE DECISION**

Following consultation with officers I give notice that I intend to make the decision set out in the attached report. If you would like to make any representations to me on this issue please do so by 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.

**The following supporting documents are attached:**

EST-001-13 - Report

Date: ...10<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.....

Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe  
Cabinet Member for Economic Development,  
Skills and Strategic Transport