

SUBJECT:	AGRI – URBAN (URBACT III PROGRAMME)
MEETING:	Individual Member Decision
DATE:	29th June 2016
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	Abergavenny

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet Member on the progress of the Agri-Urban initiative and to request approval for the development and support of a local partnership in Abergavenny within the wider AGRI-URBAN partnership of ten European countries.
- 1.2 To request that MCC Officer time is used as match funding for the initiative.
- 1.3 To request retrospective endorsement of the signature of Cllr John Prosser on the Agri-Urban Manifesto (Appendix 2) in his role as the Urban Local Group Coordinator and agree his status to act on behalf of MCC, as directed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve the request for the development and support of the local AGRI-URBAN partnership and the use of MCC Officer time as match funding for the initiative.
- 2.2 To retrospectively endorse the signature of Cllr John Prosser on the Agri-Urban Manifesto (appended) in his role as the Urban Local Group Coordinator and agree his status to act on behalf of MCC, as directed.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 For many years there has been a strong link between agri-food production and the town of Abergavenny, as symbolised by the very successful Abergavenny Food Festival and regular Farmers Markets. However, in order to support economic growth and increase GVA there is a growing need to develop new markets and opportunities for local food whilst tackling the challenge of technical innovations and new business models.
- 3.2 In January 2016, an approach was made via MCC for Abergavenny to directly engage with a European project funded under Priority 2 of the URBACT III programme. Ten European countries form the AGRI-URBAN network namely Spain, Greece, Sweden, Portugal, Belgium, Italy, Latvia, Spain, Croatia and the UK (Abergavenny).
- 3.3 The purpose of the two year initiative is to share best practice and innovative project ideas whilst also producing an integrated Action Plan for each of the individual towns. The focus of the individual Action Plans will be to identify innovative practices and business models in agri-food systems with an integrated urban/rural focus, whilst addressing employment creation opportunities. The initiative will address these challenges by addressing three objectives:
 - **Social cultural** – promoting quality of life, strengthening sense of place, creating jobs in the food sector, empowering communities by strengthening the role of citizens in economic development, etc.;
 - **Economic** – addressing outward migration, improving local image, increasing competitiveness, attracting entrepreneurs, etc.; and
 - **Environmental** – promoting organic farming, soil preservation, incorporating agriculture into urban spaces, etc.

3.4 Throughout the two year period and the development of the Action Plans, skills will be shared amongst the partners, potential projects developed and volunteers identified. There is also an expectation that these individual Action Plans will identify funding streams for the potential projects and support the development of volunteers and officers in their delivery.

4. REASONS:

4.1 This AGRI-URBAN initiative offers a great opportunity for Abergavenny and the wider Bryn y Cwm area to learn from partners and raise the profile of Abergavenny in Europe. However it also offers an opportunity to develop wider synergies with the current Vale of Usk Rural Development Programme for mutual benefit particularly in the area of shortening local supply chains and ICT exploitation. In addition, as the initiative aligns with many themes of the "Better Bryn y Cwm" Whole Place plan, there is an expectation that the Agri-Urban action plan will complement and integrate with the "Better Bryn y Cwm" plan on completion.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 None arising from the contents of this report other than the use of MCC Officer time as match funding for the initiative. The Agri-Urban manifesto is a statement of intent for the initiative and does not commit any MCC resources.

6. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- a) Project overview – Appendix 1
- b) Agri-Urban Manifesto – Appendix 2

8. FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS:

a. The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 3) are summarised below for members' consideration:

8.1 The Action Plan will provide a long term vision for Abergavenny and its rural hinterland in the Agri-food sector, with a clear focus on economic prosperity and job creation.

8.2 The exchange of experience and best practice with other project partners will ensure any interventions will have been tried and tested increasing the chance of success.

9. AUTHORS:

Cath Fallon – Head of Economy and Enterprise
Andy Smith – Strategic Investment & Funding Manager

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 748316 / 07557 190969
Email: cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01633 748318 / 07773 478633
Email: andy smith@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix One – Project Overview



AGRI – URBAN

AGRI-URBAN is about Rethinking Agrifood Production in Small and Medium-sized Cities. Many small and medium-sized cities across Europe have a relative specialization in agrifood production. Roughly speaking, it is a seemingly mature industry, which still plays an important role in terms of GDP, employment and environmental sustainability. That is why new growth potentials have to be activated by means of innovation, new business models or making the most of the cluster approach.

AGRI-URBAN will tackle the challenge of innovation and new business models in agri-food systems, developing an alternative way of understanding the link between urban and rural spaces, through an integrated urban focus and putting the target in employment creation.

AGRI-URBAN will also address this challenge by means of a multi-dimensional concept of sustainability which includes three types of objectives:

Socio-cultural objectives: promoting quality of life and wellness; strengthening sense of place in the local communities and creating jobs in the food sector; empowering communities by strengthening the role of citizens in economic development, etc.

Economic objectives: territorial integration attracting and retaining population, improving city image, increasing competitiveness, attracting professionals and entrepreneurs, etc.

Environmental objectives: promoting organic farming and good practices, as well as environmental soil preservation, avoiding urban occupation of fertile land, and incorporating agriculture in appropriate urban spaces and in the urban-rural interface, fostering multi-functionality in rural lands etc.

AGRI-URBAN must be able to generate a better understanding of all tested tools and initiatives, inside and outside the partnership, which open new perspectives and opportunities to the food production in our cities.

As a result of the joint work of the cities participating in the project, a number of technical documents will be produced that can serve as a reference for other small and medium cities committed to revive their identity as agri- cities.

AGRI – URBAN is part funded by the European Union under Priority 2 of the URBACT III programme. There are currently 6 partners within the AGRI – URBAN network

Spain – Andalucía

Portugal - Centro (PT)

Greece – Θεσσαλία

Belgium - Prov. Liège

Sweden – Stockholm

Italy - Emilia-Romagna

For the phase two application 4 other areas have been invited to join the network

Latvia – Jelgava

Croatia - Petrinja

Spain - Mollet del Valles

UK - Abergavenny

A Small budget will be available to fund staff time and travel costs to the network meetings that will be held in each partner city. 85% of the budget will be funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the 15% match funding will need to be provided by each network partner.

The members of the network will share best practice and innovative project ideas and each partner will also produce an integrated action plan for their city. Among the types of integrated solutions that can be discussed along the project life cycle and considered in the Integrated Action Plans to be produced by the partners would be the following (in all of them, employment is considered a cross-cutting element and agro-ecological production as a unifying element):

1. Land access policies

Strategy: Promote local policies aimed at facilitating access to land and the entrance of more farmers

Type of actions: creating Local Land Banks. Tax incentives to new land ownership dedicated to food production within urban-rural spatial interface.

2. Policies to support short circuits of production and consumption.

Strategy: Increase the added value of local production by encouraging the creation of short channels to reduce middlemen and allow fair pricing for farmers and access to quality products at a good price for consumers. Animation of food networks through symmetrical approaches to production and consumption.

Type of actions: Consumer groups. Consumer associations. Direct selling. Specialised small traders. Canteens and catering. Supermarkets special sections. Barter networks, etc.

3. Policies of training and improved capabilities in farming.

Strategy: Provide appropriate training to potential entrepreneurs, small farmers, workers, people with social needs and citizens committed to agro-ecological production and consumption.

Type of actions: Basic training activities (agro-ecological production, new farmers, social vegetable gardens...). Workshops incorporating farmers to traineeships and internships. Regulated Vocational Training. Mobility programmes in the European Union

4. Policies for the creation of productive and employment spaces

Strategy: Encourage local agro-ecological productive activities which are labour-intensive and so job-creating.

Type of actions: Research projects. Nurseries dedicated to the production of organic seed and plants. Auxiliary industry. Environmentally friendly agri-food crafts. Communal areas for agri-food processing and crafts, cooking and catering. Specialised restaurants. Agro-ecological farms. Incubators for small agricultural undertakings in organic farming.

5. Policies for land use and protection of agricultural areas

Strategy: Promote sustainable land management, based on the protection of land suited for agricultural uses, as well as on facilitating a balanced connection between the urban and rural areas.

Type of actions: Delimitation and protection of agricultural areas of special environmental and productive interest in metropolitan contexts. Creation of Agricultural Parks. Promotion of urban agriculture and social vegetable gardens.

6. Social and cultural policies.

Strategy: Promote the empowerment and organisation of the community, facilitating an instrument for participation, management and communication between stakeholders.

Type of actions: Creation of participatory bodies. Credit unions and ethical investment committees. Crowd funding for agro-ecological projects. Associations of producers and consumers. Education and health programs. Agro-ecological volunteers.

7. Policy for environmental sustainability

Strategy: local policies aimed at achieving the sustainability of the food production systems within the municipal limits, ensuring the conservation of natural resources based on a "good, clean and fair" production.

Type of actions: Promotion of natural and cultivated biodiversity. Energy efficiency and reduction of emissions. Incentives for the use of renewable energy sources. Soil conservation practices and erosion control. Efficient water management. Use of agricultural and domestic waste for composting and other uses. Recovery and reuse of vegetable oils.

8. SMEs policy connected to agro-food.

Strategy: Create the political basis for the implementation of agro-ecological Integrated Action Plans aimed at improving the sustainability of the social and productive system as well as job creation.

Type of actions: urban planning rules. Standards to support small scale agri-food production. Tax incentive policy to support agro-ecological production. Local observatories of production and consumption. Agro-ecological public procurement. Acquisition and transfer of land. Organisation of social and economic support events. Adaptation and provision of equipment and infrastructure. Identity and image for local brands.

The towns and cities participating in the initial partnership of AGRI-URBAN have already developed different actions related to the project theme and have demonstrated a clear commitment to jointly test and develop new initiatives to be implemented locally through specific Integrated Action Plans.

- Public procurement committed to local production models and quality, preferably organic

We commit to:

- Developing Integrated Local Action Plans aimed at promoting local food production and consumption in line with the ideas previously exposed
 - Streamlining all actors of civil society, businesses and institutions to promote their commitment to these policies and ensure their active participation in defining and monitoring them
 - Disseminating in our cities, countries and the whole European Union the results of our common work and the lessons learned, contributing in particular to strengthening the transnational work of agri-food small and medium sized cities
- In Mollet del Vallès (Barcelona), June 9, 2016

Mr. Josep Monràs
Mayor of Mollet del Valles (Spain)

Mr. Jesus Rojano
Mayor of Baena (Spain)

Mr. Ziedonis Caune
Mayor of Jeljava Local Municipality (Latvia)
(Croatia)

Mr. Darinko Dumbović
Mayor of Petrinja

Mr. Eric Lomba
Mayor of Marchin (Belgium)

Mr. Konstantinos Maravas
Mayor of Pyli (Greece)

Mr. John L. Prosser
Deputy Mayor of Abergavenny (United Kingdom)

Mr. Paulo Alexandre Fernandes
Bernardo
Mayor of Fundao (Portugal)

Mr. Pierre Aschieri
Mayor of Mouans-Sartoux (France)

Mayor of Södertälje (Sweden)

Mr. Paolo Lucchi
Mayor of Cesena (Italy)

