

# RURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS AYRSHIRE CAN NOW BID FOR A SHARE OF A MILLION-EURO (€) FUND TO ENHANCE BROADBAND TO THEIR AREAS

The million euro investment will be delivered by the LEADER Programme which supports **small-scale, community-driven** projects in rural areas and is aimed at improving coverage and bringing faster broadband to rural communities.

Rural Secretary Richard Lohead said:

*“Fresh investment through LEADER will bring faster speeds, improved coverage or simply research to identify digital needs of an area.”*



## What do I need to do?

This latest announcement of support under SRDP means that communities will have the opportunity to define the broadband needs for their area and, with technical assistance via the LEADER office, develop a project which meets these needs **n.b. 100% of project costs will be funded through the Challenge Fund**. The LAG will then assess the merits of these applications and bid to the Challenge Fund to take these projects forward.

## Who can apply?

- ◆ **Individuals** (although the project must support LEADER principles and demonstrate wider rural development benefits)
- ◆ **Constituted community groups**
- ◆ **Public organisations and agencies**
- ◆ **Partnerships, Trusts and other non-governmental organisations**
- ◆ **Social enterprises**
- ◆ **Collaborative business/community organisations (constituted groups)**

## Application Process:

- ⇒ Attend Ayrshire Broadband for Communities Workshop –date & venue tbc
- ⇒ Project proposals to Ayrshire LEADER – closing date *Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2010*
- ⇒ Local Action Group assess applications – *30<sup>th</sup> August 2010*
- ⇒ LAG submits strategic bid to Scottish Government for Ayrshire Challenge Fund – *24<sup>th</sup> September 2010*
- ⇒ Scottish Government assesses bids and advises Local Action Groups of outcome
- ⇒ Where successful – projects commence from *October 2010 onwards*

## What type of project is eligible?

Projects should be in keeping with LEADER principles and applications made to the Ayrshire LAG should have a positive rural development impact which they consider improved broadband access would bring. **NO match funding is required i.e. 100% of project costs will be funded under Challenge Fund.**

Examples of eligible projects include:

- ◆ community groups wishing to upgrade exchanges
- ◆ pilot projects into next generation broadband
- ◆ supporting a business collective to access better broadband etc.

**N.B. Free IT technical expertise may be available to you in helping design your project – please contact the LEADER office to enquire**

## For further information:

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