



Commission for
Rural Communities
Tackling rural disadvantage



a joint LIVE WORK NETWORK and COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES event

March 17 2006, The Watershed, Bristol

www.liveworknet.com

homes mean business



event supported by



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WELCOME to **Homes Mean Business**, a national conference organised jointly by the Commission for Rural Communities and Live Work Network

This is the second national conference of the Live Work Network. At our first event, held at BT's London headquarters in 2004, we looked at how urban live/work business clusters can be created. Today we are exploring ways to address the challenges faced by home-based businesses and home workers outside the big cities

This event will tackle two related themes: ways that people who work in residential property can be best helped to achieve their goals, and ways that live/work property designed specially for work use can play its part. Where there is a choice of sessions, we have split them accordingly

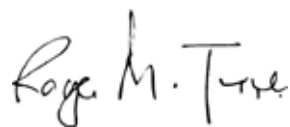
Today also marks the launch of ***Under the radar, tracking and supporting rural home-based businesses***. Taking this report as our starting point, we want to help you understand the needs of this hidden part of the rural economy. The conference should help improve your capacity to help a wide range of home-based business to thrive in your area

We have included in this pack an **ideas document**, containing a range of suggested actions for different agencies. We want to hear what you think of these as the day progresses. Using your additional input, we intend to submit a final version of this document to central government after the conference

We hope you enjoy the day and leave ready to actively support home-based business as a sustainable future-facing ingredient of your economic and property development work



Tim Dwelly
Director, Live Work Network



Roger Turner
Skills and Enterprise Director, Commission for Rural Communities

The **Live Work Network** exists to encourage information sharing and best practice amongst those who seek to develop and support live/work property. Part of this process is to lobby for sensible reforms
www.liveworknet.com

The **Commission for Rural Communities** is an operating division of the Countryside Agency. The Commission is a rural advocate (the voice for rural people, businesses and communities), an expert adviser (giving evidence-based objective advice to government and others) and an independent watchdog (monitoring and reporting on the delivery of policies nationally, regionally and locally)
www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk

- 8.30 Coffee and registration**
- 9.30 Welcome**
Philip Lowe, Countryside Agency
- 9.40 Homes mean business**
Max Comfort, author of *Portfolio people*
- 9.50 Onto the radar – research and aims of the day**
Tim Dwelly, Live Work Network
Roger Turner, Commission for Rural Communities
- 10.30 choice one: Market town hubs and home business networks**
Lynda Davis, Digital Peninsula Network, Cornwall
John Passmore, Ross-on-Wye market town initiative, Herefordshire
Members of Digital Peninsula Network
Chair Toby Hyam
Q&A
- choice two: Rural live/work – getting the ingredients right**
Paul Fong, Hunter Page Planning
Karl Roberts/Terry Grove-White, Carrick District Council
Chair Andy Lake
Q&A
- 11.30 Coffee**
- 12.00 What do home businesses really need?**
Emma Jones, Enterprise Nation
Home-based businesses from Calderdale, Shropshire, Devon
Q&A
- 1.00 Lunch**
Visit home working businesses in the Home Business Area
Suggest actions at the Ideas Area
Networking
- 2.15 choice one: Creating a sustainable new homeworking community at Newquay**
Tim Gray, Duchy of Cornwall
Susheel Rao, author of EcoHomes
Q&A
- choice two: Hard to reach home workers – our view**
Roger Turner and Paul Pennycook, Commission for Rural Communities
Q&A

3.15 choice one: Home working support – Q&A surgery

Fay Easton, Enterprising Britons, Shropshire
Toby Hyam, Creative Space Management
Frances Truscott, co-author Under the radar
Max Comfort

choice two: Live/work surgery – Q&A surgery

Spencer Style, Wharfside Regeneration
Andy Lake, www.flexibility.co.uk
Paul Fong, Hunter Page Planning

4.00 Mainstream support for home-based business: the response

Tom Walker, Small Business Service
Ian Edwards, Rural Regeneration Zone, Advantage West Midlands
Roger Turner, Commission for Rural Communities

4.45 Farewell drinks, networking

Ends

Support

We are extremely grateful to the government's Academy for Sustainable Communities and Creating Excellence (the south west regeneration centre of excellence) for supporting this event



www.creatingexcellence.org.uk
www.ascskills.org.uk

Delegate pack sponsorship

Enterprise Nation is a product of Redbrick Enterprises Ltd. It is a new and unique website providing information, inspiration and connections to homeworkers across the UK. A team of experts contribute weekly features, topical news stories and 'how to' guides for people working from home and those considering the same route. There are also dedicated channels for employers that are implementing homeworking and for UK towns, cities and regions that are looking to encourage and support home enterprise in their area



www.enterprisenation.com

Official conference magazine

New Start is the weekly news magazine in the UK for over 83,000 people working in community regeneration and related fields. A financially and editorially independent journal, it provides news, comment and analysis and stimulates policy debate. It is also a prime source of job opportunities in the sector



www.newstartmag.co.uk

Refreshments sponsorship

Hunter Page Planning provides a professional service on a whole range of planning matters from applications, appeals, feasibility studies, site appraisals, development plan policy matters and urban designs to master planning. All staff have a background in the public sector. The company specialises in live/work planning



www.hunterpage.net

Simon Ashmore is the director of Azhora Limited, a company he runs from home in West Cornwall. Specialising in real and virtual business networking for members or clients for over ten years, he recently left the public sector to create his own business which offers independent impartial advice and support to all kinds of networks

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Max Comfort has had an office or a studio at home since he was 12. An irrepressible enthusiast of portfolio working, and one of the UK's first holistic business adviser/practitioners, he now writes, broadcasts, lectures, mentors, coaches and holds workshops on work. Although he loves the creative buzz of being around people of all ages, particularly those risking doing something they're passionate about, he enjoys the flexibility, tranquility and convenience of working from his home base

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John Cowles is managing director of Penzance-based Altcom Ltd, a website and software development company with clients across the world including Reuters. Having built the business from home he has expanded Altcom into office premises, though he still regularly works from home. John manages the Live Work Network's website and its new property website www.liveworkhomes.co.uk. He is a former chairman of Digital Peninsula Network

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Lynda Davis is director of Digital Peninsula Network, which supports over 200 mainly home-based businesses in West Cornwall with a hub facility and many tailored services. Prior to this she worked for a variety of not-for-profit organisations in the UK and the USA, increasing income and improving visibility and profile, to create long term sustainability

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Tim Dwelly is director of Live Work Network, the UK's leading knowledge resource on live/work property. A home working specialist, he has written influential policy reports for ODPM, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Work Foundation, the Housing Corporation, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and the Commission for Rural Communities. He has also helped both local authorities and developers to create successful live/work schemes around the UK. He works from home

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Fay Easton is partnership director with Shrewsbury Enterprise Partnership. She led the Shrewsbury team to success in the 2005 Enterprising Britain competition, with Shrewsbury being named West Midlands capital of enterprise and a runner up in the national finals.

Last year she led the 'Enterprising Britons work from home in Shropshire' project

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Ian Edwards is rural regeneration zone team leader for Advantage West Midlands. He spent most of the past 15 years working in urban regeneration in the west midlands and south west for development corporations, city challenge partnerships and more recently, Bristol city council. At AWM he has led the implementation of the RDA's rural regeneration zone in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire

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Paul Fong is founder and managing director of Hunter Page Planning, a national planning consultancy based in Cheltenham. The company has specialised in live/work development in recent years, notably steering through the successful application for the UK's largest rural live/work scheme to date at Malmesbury in Wiltshire

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Tim Gray is estate surveyor to the Duchy of Cornwall, for whom he has worked since 1994. He is responsible for the Duchy's development projects and its commercial property portfolio. Tim is currently leading the development of a new homeworking-enabled community of over 2,000 homes at Newquay in Cornwall, where a live/work quarter is also planned

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Dr. Anne Handley is a home-based information consultant living in rural West Yorkshire. In 2003 she and other homeworkers campaigned to bring broadband to the Upper Calder Valley and created 3-C (Calder Connect Cooperative), a locally controlled internet service provider. She has also helped to develop Creative Valley, a local business network for the creative and knowledge industries

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Toby Hyam is managing director of Creative Space Management, a specialist facilities management company providing co-located workspace and hubs for creative and knowledge based businesses. Toby has extensive experience of setting up media centres, creative networks and services to support live/workers, home-based and mobile workers

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Emma Jones is managing director of Redbrick, the UK's leading consultancy on regional entrepreneurial development. Redbrick jointly created and managed 'Home to Enterprising Britons' in Shropshire, a project to boost the profitability of home based businesses in the county. Redbrick has recently launched www.enterprisenation.com to offer information, inspiration and connections to homeworkers across the UK

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Andy Lake is an associate of the Live Work Network and a flexible working expert. He has advised local authorities and the ODPM on the development of planning policies for live/work and homeworking. Andy is also editor of www.flexibility.co.uk, the online journal of flexible work

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Professor Philip Lowe OBE is director of RELU (Rural Economy and Land Use) at Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy. He is a board member of the Countryside Agency, chair of the Market Towns Advisory Forum, and a member of DEFRA's Science Advisory Council

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Bruce McMichael is a freelance writer and is building a portfolio career working from a rural home in Shropshire. He is currently developing self-catering accommodation in a converted granary and a publishing company focused on local business, food and drink in the west midlands, while working as a business journalist and researcher

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John Passmore is market towns officer for Ross-on-Wye and Ledbury in Herefordshire. He is currently facilitating the market town initiative in Ross. Having assisted the regeneration partnership to develop a 10 year strategy, he is overseeing a strategy to create a live/work development in the town to help business start ups and create a vibrant business buzz

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Paul Pennycook is senior policy adviser in the enterprise and skills team of the Commission for Rural Communities. Previously he has held senior positions in a range of public and voluntary organisations, managing social economic and environmental programmes. He also worked for 10 years as a business adviser to the cooperative sectors in Avon, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire
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Susheel Rao is a renowned sustainable development expert. Currently working with the Duchy of Cornwall as an adviser on its new settlement at Newquay, she is also an adviser to BRE's Centre for Sustainable Construction and was author of the EcoHomes standards
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Karl Roberts is head of development control and **Terry Grove-White** is head of strategic and community planning at Carrick District Council in Cornwall. Carrick is the first rural authority to develop a comprehensive planning policy on homeworking and live/work, currently being considered for adoption. The council has received a number of applications for live/work developments and has approved a scheme at Falmouth with affordable units and hub facilities
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Spencer Style is a respected UK live/work developer, with a strength in transforming old buildings, abandoned theatres and disused sites, with creative concepts that capture the imagination. His company Wharfside Regeneration has completed a series of large scale mixed-use developments in the UK, notably the Jam Factory on the bank of the Thames. It is now extending its portfolio with a broad range of innovative live/work schemes from Cornwall to East Anglia
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Frances Truscott is regeneration principal of Future Perspectives Co-operative, a sustainable development consultancy. A Live Work Network associate, she was co-author of ***Under the radar***, the report being launched today. She is currently working on a project for One NorthEast, investigating the regeneration potential of rural home-based working in north east England. She works from home
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Roger Turner leads the Commission for Rural Communities' enterprise and skills team, working to improve policies and support for rural economies. Following a similar role with the Countryside Agency's rural economies programme, it builds on his 30 years experience in rural affairs. His career has included management of private, charitable and local authority estates, advice and policy advocacy at the NFU and the RSPB, advice to the EU Parliament and UN and running his own consultancy
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Thomas Walker from the DTI's Small Business Service, is responsible for overseeing the development of enterprise policy to meet the Government's ambition to make the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a business. He manages policy teams on building an enterprise culture, encouraging a more dynamic start-up market and building the capacity for small business growth
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Stella West-Harling is an organic food pioneer and managing director of Ashburton Cookery and Wine schools. She has been active in the Buy Local seasonal organic food movement since the early 1980s and was Dartmoor food consultant for Devon county council. Her business has been nominated for a number of awards and, despite its phenomenal growth, is still a home-based company
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IDEAS FOR ACTION

This draft document contains an initial selection of ideas to improve the prospects and effectiveness of home based businesses and the self employed who work from home. These ideas are based on earlier research by the Live Work Network, particularly reports for the Commission for Rural Communities and the Housing Corporation.

What we hope to achieve today is a **consensus view** from a wide range of professionals and end-users on what is practical, achievable and desirable.

We want our ideas to be **tested** today. Have we got things right or do any of these ideas need improving or rejecting? Please give us your feedback and your own suggestions, participate at our **Ideas Area** and feel free to tell our roving reporters (Lisa Thompson and Frances Truscott) what you think!

Your contributions will help us create a better informed and more focused document, one which we hope to circulate for approval and then take to **central government** as a record of this national event.

The Question

What **practical actions** do you suggest each agency should complete to

- improve support for home-based business?
- encourage appropriate live/work development?

I Ideas for Government

Government action could set an overall framework to encourage meaningful mainstream support for home-based business for the first time

- provide a clear steer for agencies and local authorities to act upon: **encourage** home working and live/work property in national policies by explicitly linking them to benefits such as reduced car use, mixed communities, rural economic sustainability and better use of under-achieving land and buildings
- **recognise** the growing significance of home-based businesses in the rural economy: 11.79% of economically active people work from home in rural districts (census 2001)
- make business support for home-based rural businesses a **target** for business support agencies, enforced through a public service agreement
- give one government department or agency lead **responsibility** for promoting and tracking support for rural home-based businesses
- **clarify** planning and sustainable communities policies so they explicitly support appropriate live/work development as a form of sustainable development
- **ensure** that RDAs, the Small Business Service and Business Link operators develop specific strategies that support home-based businesses in rural areas
- add support for home-based businesses to the **comprehensive performance assessment** criteria for all rural local authorities
- recognise home-based businesses as a **sector** in its own right, based on a way of working. Given their diversity, this status is necessary to avoid ongoing low visibility and fragmented support
- extend the tax exempt **'rent a room'** scheme principle to home-based business, including live/work provision
- remove **VAT** from genuine live/work schemes to encourage developers to maximise workspace provision

- encourage RDAs to support **pilot** rural live/work schemes in each region, to inform future policy development and learn from good practice
- review **social housing** guidelines, including tenancy agreements that prohibit home working and any space standards/allocations that can be shown to make home working more difficult on the basis of tenure
- update **Charity Commission** restrictions on business use by housing association tenants
- give all social housing tenants a new **right** to use their home for work in any way that does not disturb others
- revise **housing benefit rules** to ensure tenants are not penalised for having a 'spare' room that is used for work or study
- review **red tape** in the benefits system that uses inappropriate hours-based (rather than output based) criteria for assessing entitlements for home workers, especially those who are self-employed

2 Ideas for Regional Development Agencies

RDAs set overall objectives for business links, collate regional statistics and fund regeneration interventions. They can ensure home working is a key part of this work

- develop regional home working and live/work **policies** as part of economic development and innovation strategies
- set clear **annual targets** for supporting rural home-based businesses for business link operators under RDA-managed contracts
- work with observatories and research organisations to establish statistical benchmarks to **track future trends** in home working and identify hot spots of home business activity
- work with English Partnerships to encourage and support regional live/work **pathfinder projects**
- make **home-based business strategies** a requirement for regional economic development and innovation strategies, including appropriate and carefully targeted services
- expand the definition of economic growth potential to include businesses that **sub-contract** rather than employ staff. Recognise that sub-contracting contributes to economic growth
- incorporate options for home-based businesses in targets for **disadvantaged** people including disabled people, lone parents, ethnic minority groups and older people
- fund regional **pilot hub schemes** to support home-based businesses, for example in market towns and as part of live/work developments. Learn lessons from these pilots to shape business support
- review mixed business/residential options for use of **existing buildings** in market towns, villages and agricultural areas
- work with regeneration centres of excellence to **showcase** regionally relevant case studies of home-based working initiatives to enable others to learn from good practice

3 Ideas for local government

Local authority planning and economic development teams should review and improve their policy and practice on home based business and live/work property, to boost the local economy and enhance sustainable development

- put in place systems to **measure the impact** of home-based working on housing, jobs, businesses and transport
- ensure **sustainability policies** factor in environmental improvements offered by home-based businesses, including reduced emissions and transport reduction
- establish what public and private **services and support** home-based businesses may need. Set annual targets for provision
- **audit spending and time** spent on business support across the district to ensure future efforts are equitably distributed to all businesses, including those based at home
- enable home-based businesses to operate openly without **fear of enforcement** or other punitive actions out of step with modern working practices
- help to create **'hub' facilities** and networks offering locally-appropriate services and meeting spaces for home-based businesses, perhaps in market towns
- consider **outsourcing** mainstream economic development budgets, enabling appropriate local groups to organise support and facilities that best meet home businesses' needs
- work with **local strategic partnerships** to incorporate support for home-based businesses in their strategies, with resources earmarked for micro-enterprises

- draw up well-researched live/work and home-working **planning policies**. Link this process with local development frameworks
- review planning emphasis on building use for tourism, which can create high levels of traffic. Consider more **sustainable economic development** focused on home-based working
- consider **encouraging/permitting** live/work development on sites where this makes best use of employment or unallocated land
- use Section 106 planning gain agreements to maximise **economic development** benefits from live/work schemes (eg hub and business support facilities)
- on live/work schemes of sufficient scale, look to achieve an appropriate proportion of **affordable live/work** units managed by a housing association
- ensure **conditions** imposed on live/work developments are not too onerous or unenforceable
- monitor council and housing association landlords' **tenancy agreements and allocations**, to make sure home working is not barred or made physically difficult

4 Ideas for business support agencies

Business links, learning and skills councils and enterprise agencies control most business and skills support activities. They need to be aware of the potential contribution of home-based business when designing services and interventions. A great deal needs to be done to connect with businesses that operate from home

- **audit** the amount of support offered to home-based businesses, developing a statistical framework to track future assistance
- **tailor services** provided (including contracted services) to make them relevant and accessible for home-based businesses
- business links: adapt the **value added growth model** that identifies target businesses for intensive one-to-one business support, counting contracted-out services as adding value, not as a cost
- divert existing mainstream funding to support **targeted projects** that home-based businesses feel comfortable with, to ensure a wide take-up in the sector and to maximise business survival and growth
- devise innovative ways of meeting the government's **'rural proof' target** to provide assistance to rural businesses equal to those in urban areas
- improve micro-business support by **using local networks** of businesses and review automatic use of enterprise agencies

5 Ideas for social landlords

The revolution in home-working needs to be a real option for tenants in rural areas. Compared with the wider population, social housing tenants are least likely to be economically active and to own their own transport

- **continue** developing innovative live/work schemes, but not at the expense of action to support home working in existing stock
- have a **policy on tenant home working** which encourages and supports home-based working, self-employment and/or study. Remove overly restrictive clauses in tenancy agreements
- aim to provide an **extra room** for work/study for all households where home-based working is a viable option. Review allocations policies, so applicants can express a preference for a work room for study/employment use
- in **tenant surveys**, include standard questions on interest in/need to work from home as well as use of computers/broadband. Share your findings with relevant local employment and education agencies
- encourage **cash economy** working from home to become a legitimate business. Actively help and encourage tenants to establish home-based businesses
- **benchmark** home-based economic activity against other social landlords and share this information with LSPs, the local authority and business support agencies
- make sure **new technology** installed in homes addresses work and enterprise, not just access to welfare services
- seek **contributions** to broadband and home working support projects from telecom and cable companies
- improve home-based working options for **disabled tenants** by incorporating home working capacity and technology into Lifetime Homes and Part M compliance in new build

Findings

In our reports *Under the radar* and *Rural live/work* we show that **home based businesses represent a significant yet hidden part of the rural economy. Key findings include...**

More than **one in nine** (11.8 %) economically active people in rural districts work mainly from home, over half a million people (census 2001)

Home-based working is significantly more **common** in rural than in urban areas outside London (8.02%)

Self employment is also more common in rural areas: 16.3% compared to 12.17% in urban districts (census 2001)

There is a **strong correlation** between home-based working and self employment. 58% of rural home workers are self-employed

New analysis by Live Work Network shows 6.88% of the rural district workforce are working mainly from home **and** self-employed – compared to 4.00% in urban areas. Figures are significantly higher in many districts

Our survey of all 145 local authorities defined as rural in 2005 found **only four** doing any research into home-based working. Most admitted no use of readily available information on this trend to inform policies/strategies

Our survey of Business Links with rural clientele found advisers reporting that their traditional service is largely seen as **irrelevant** by home-based businesses

Agencies reported a **sea-change** in home-working. Declining agriculture and the advent of broadband is spawning new **service, ICT and craft** businesses, a growing number created by in-migrants

Comprehensive research identified only a **handful** of one-off rural projects with any significant remit to target the needs of home-based businesses. Some are attending today

Solutions

Live/work property is one vehicle that can help to put home based business back onto the radar, providing visible premises where businesses can relate easily to one another and provide a focus for wider regeneration

Another related solution is to establish self-managed networks of home based businesses, with appropriate 'hub' facilities. On sites of sufficient scale, live/work development can help to cross-subsidise these things without grant