

**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****Decision Report**

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Decision Maker:</b> | Executive Member for Policy and Resources             |
| <b>Date:</b>           | 24 July 2014  |
| <b>Title:</b>          | Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals             |
| <b>Reference:</b>      | 5940  |
| <b>Report From:</b>    | Director of Culture Communities and Business Services |

**Contact name:** Des Hobson

**Tel:** 01962 84 55 66      **Email:** des.hobson@hants.gov.uk

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to make some key proposals for Rural Delivery project funding. The proposals have been developed in accordance with the revised Rural Delivery Strategy priorities approved by Cabinet in March 2014 (Report 5684).
- 1.2. In order to support these objectives and to maintain momentum with a number of existing key initiatives six proposals for funding have come forward, totalling £155,800, plus a contingency of £15,000, which represents approximately half the total budget available.
- 1.3. A supplementary report will be brought before Cabinet in autumn 2014, following up on the decisions agreed by Cabinet and providing further information upon partner consultation together with the strategic context for further potential funding milestones. The emphasis of that report will be on securing ongoing external partnership and collaboration in pursuit of the priorities set by Cabinet together with a longer-term financial plan.

## **2. Contextual information**

- 2.1. The County Council's revised Rural Delivery Strategy was agreed by Cabinet in March 2014, with five new priority actions around community resilience, rural transport, self-help, communications and economic development.
- 2.2. The funding proposals identified below fit within these priorities and build on existing initiatives to maximise impact and use of available resources. Many are supported by additional Departmental or partner match funding. The proposals have emerged through Departmental submissions to the Rural Coordination Group chaired by Councillor Andrew Gibson. They all meet the priorities set and offer an opportunity to make significant positive impact by

supporting or expanding successful interventions in rural areas. It also includes a pilot initiative on supporting older people released from hospital into rural areas.

### **3. Finance**

- 3.1. Cabinet agreed to carry forward the balance of £186,000 from the 2013/14 rural strategy budget allocation, making a total resource of £386,000 in 14/15 available for project funding. Any future funding requests will be set within the context of a three year financial plan presented to Cabinet in autumn 2014.
- 3.2. **Village Agents. Total funding sought £30,800.** This highly successful scheme is run by Adult Services, and delivered by Age Concern Hampshire, supporting volunteers working within their local communities. There are currently 32 Village Agents in 22 rural areas. Current plans enable this to be expanded to 45 Village Agents. The additional funding requested would allow the recruitment, training and retention and ongoing support of a further 15 Village Agents, taking the total to 60 Village Agents. The Village Agents programme was initiated by a Rural Delivery Strategy grant and is currently solely funded by Adult Services at £56,000 p.a. This scheme featured very positively in the LGA peer review earlier this year and is seen as a highly successful initiative in support of support of Hampshire's communities.
- 3.3. **Supporting older people and reducing pressure on hospitals. Total funding sought £10,000.** Adult Services has submitted a joint application to the 'supporting older people and reducing pressure on hospitals' fund (a national fund led by the Cabinet office and NHS England), specifically for older people discharged from Southampton New Forest (Lymington) and Winchester hospitals. The application builds on and imaginatively develops the existing services provided to older people in their own homes after discharge from hospital. It will be concentrating on providing support to older people to reduce re-admission to hospital. This extra support will in many cases be provided by volunteers.
- 3.4. The £10,000 funding requested is to support work in the rural parts of the New Forest and southern Winchester City Council area. This funding would be used for supporting volunteers to attend client visits, for client visits to continue for the full period of the project, and to ensure travel to training can be made available for volunteers.
- 3.5. **Community Challenge Fund. Total funding sought £35,000, plus an additional £15,000 available as a contingency.** The Community Challenge Fund provides grants of up to around £5,000 to community groups and organisations to support local activity in support of the rural priorities. Match funding by the local community in cash and in kind is required. The support offered by the Community Challenge Fund is highly regarded by local Members and village communities. The fund is administered via the County Council's grants database. Projects funded in 2012/2013 included support towards restoration of Stockbridge Town Hall, play equipment for

Micheldever and Stratton pre-school and support for Hampshire Country Learning school visits to farm businesses.

- 3.6. Subject to the Executive Member's agreement, it is proposed that approvals of less than £1,000 be approved by officers following discussion with the Assistant to the Executive Member, using delegated powers. This would facilitate an expedited response to grant applicants. Agreed grants would be reported to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources retrospectively. Proposals greater than £1,000 would be brought to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources' Decision Day in the usual way.
- 3.7. **Funding for Village Shops. Total funding sought £50,000.** Village shops lie at the heart of many communities, and this grant scheme would help shops to modernise and develop, and introduce new business models such as community ownership. Advice is provided by the County Council's Economic Development team, together with legacy funding from SEEDA, but funds are now exhausted, hence the application for rural funding to enable ongoing support to be given. Subject to this funding application being successful it would be proposed to review its success against agreed outcomes after one year. There will be some match funding from communities with significant in-kind support expected.
- 3.8. **Thriving villages – best practice transfer. Total funding sought £30,000.** Grant funding would support transfer of business knowledge to rural communities around New Milton, in Hart district, and in southern Winchester district (Wickham, Bishop's Waltham and Denmead), using the considerable existing expertise of the town centre managers in these locations. District and Town Councils have pledged part-funding. Local Members support this initiative. Another, similar role in Andover is currently part-funded from the Economic Development budget in ETE. The local development officers will work with community groups and business organisations to develop the economy of market towns and surrounding villages.
- 3.9. The interim grant applications outlined above total £155,800, plus a contingency of £15,000, which represents approximately half the total budget available. They build on existing initiatives supported previously from the Rural Strategy budget and Departmental funding and have the full endorsement and engagement of the lead Departments involved.
- 3.10. The autumn Cabinet report will include any necessary further funding requests set within a longer-term financial plan. This will include consideration of rural transport initiatives together with key updates as requested by Cabinet.

**4. Recommendations**

- 4.1. Following consideration and support by Councillor Andrew Gibson – the Assistant on Rural Matters, the Executive Member for Policy and Resources is asked to approve funding as set out in paragraph 3 of this report. Full details of the bids submitted are at Appendix 1.
- 4.2. Following Cabinet agreement to re-launch the Community Challenge Fund, the views of the Executive Member for Policy and Resources are requested to confirm how he would like Community Challenge Fund grants to be determined, and whether the approach set out in paragraph 3.6 would be the preferred approach.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>          | yes |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): |     |
| <b>Maximising well-being:</b>                            | yes |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): |     |
| <b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>                   | yes |
| Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate): |     |

**Other Significant Links**

| <b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>  |      |             |
|---|------|-------------|
| Hampshire County Council's Rural Delivery Strategy  | 5684 | March 2014  |
| Rural Delivery Strategy: review of progress 2009-2013   | 4835 | April 2013  |
| Funding for Rural Delivery Strategy projects: performance against 2011/12 and project proposals for 2012/13 | 4048 | June 2012   |
| Rural Delivery Strategy - progress and future direction   | 3372 | Nov 2011    |
| Funding for Rural Delivery Strategy projects  | 3001 | June 2011   |
| Funding for Rural Delivery Strategy projects  | 1799 | July 2010   |
| Rural Delivery Action Plan for Hampshire County Council – progress and performance                          | 1127 | Jan 2010    |
| Rural Delivery Action Plan  | 865  | Aug 2009    |
| Rural Delivery Strategy for Hampshire County Council – consultation and development                         |      | March 2009  |
| Rural Delivery Strategy for Hampshire County Council  |      | July 2008   |
| <b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>  |      |             |
| <u>Title</u><br>None  |      | <u>Date</u> |

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document

Location

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

- 1.1. Successful implementation will reduce inequalities by improving service delivery in rural areas and increase access to services.
- 1.2. A number of the proposals seek to deliver supported benefits for more vulnerable groups particularly older residents in rural areas.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

- 2.1. Support for more vulnerable groups and the infrastructure and networks to deliver it will reduce isolation and exposure to potential criminal acts. More vibrant and active communities are likely to suffer less crime and anti-social behaviour.

### **3. Climate Change:**

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? Through supporting local facilities it would reduce need to travel.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? The initiatives proposed support the culture of self help and self reliance which are critical following severe weather such as blizzards, gales and flooding, when communities may become inaccessible to external support, and lose access to mains services such as electricity. Climate changes is expected to increase occurrence of severe weather.

# APPENDIX 1

## DETAILS OF FUNDING PROPOSALS

### VILLAGE AGENTS

**Total funding sought £30,800**

**Proposal to increase the scale of the Village Agent Project**  
***Locally based support for rural communities in Hampshire***

**Background**

The Village Agent project is currently funded to run for three years until July 2015. Within this timescale 45 Village Agents will be recruited to volunteer, sometimes as stand alone volunteers, sometimes as a pair within one rural community. They exist to support older people to live well and independently through offering up to 6 hours per week of volunteer time. Village Agents aim to reduce social isolation and to build strong and cohesive, locally sustained and inclusive communities. The use of volunteers rather than paid staff as Village Agents is a model which has been developed by Hampshire County Council and is one which is unique within England.

It has always been understood that the Village Agent scheme is a replicable model, which, at a relatively low unit cost (approximately £1,500 per Village Agent per annum) produces measurable positive impacts for older people within rural and often isolated villages and hamlets. There are over 250 rural parishes in Hampshire and many more hamlets and smaller settlements. Many of these have a significant older population, which is expected to increase as the population of Hampshire generally continues to age.

**Current position – February 2014**

There are currently 32 Village Agents in 22 rural areas. Crucially, all of the Village Agents live locally and are the trusted local contact who will proactively make contact with older people (age 55 years +) and become the local link, creating a network between older people and the support and information services available.

**Impacts and outcomes**

Through the pilot and during the first 18 months of the project the impact of the Village Agents has been measurable in a number of ways. For example in the year from January 2013- January 2014:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The number of Village Agent volunteer hours delivered is 2,485. | Home Fire Safety visits completed=19                    |
| Events attended by Village Agents = 273                         | Events organised by Village Agents = 104                |
| Older People met by Village Agents =5180                        | Village Agent referrals to others for help/support =148 |

### Outcome stories:

- A lady had requested a special home fire safety visit as she wears a hearing aid and was worried about hearing a smoke alarm at night when her hearing aid is out. The Village Agent for the area organised a visit from Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Sensory Team and they fitted an under pillow unit. She said “This has made such a difference to me. I was quite worried before but now get good nights sleep”.
- One Village Agent was alerted to a lady with both arms broken, who had been in hospital for six weeks and was desperate to get home. He enabled her to get a private care package and home support, so that she could come home. She is now a totally different person who has gone from being depressed to recovering being positive for most of the time. The Village Agent expects to see her out and about with her dog shortly having fully recovered.
- Thanks to signposting from one Village Agent, a lady with severe breathing problems has had a stair-lift installed – this is from SSAFA. . She is now able to sleep in her own bed instead of a ‘put you up’ in the lounge. This is a significant life changing event for the lady.

### Proposal

1)To extend the scope and reach of Village Agents from a total of 45 Village Agents up to a total of 60 Village Agents across the County.

This increase in capacity would be managed by the current voluntary organisation lead, Age Concern Hampshire, through the mechanism of a grant.

This additional resource to be applied to the 15 month period from April 2014 -July 2015, at which point the overall funding for the project is due to cease.

2)To fund the continuation of 60 Village Agents through a programme for a further year July 2015-July 2016 through a contract up to a value of £60,000

3)To fund the continuation of 60 Village Agents through a programme for a further year July 2016-July 2017 through a contract up to a value of £60,000

### Budget & Financial Impacts

The Village Agent project is currently funded in total by Hampshire County Council Adult Services Department (July 2012 – July 2015)

Total funding = £170,000 (This equates to £56,666 pa)

For the 15 months April 2014- July 2015 the proposed budget increase is £30,800. This would allow the recruitment, training and retention and on going support of a further 15 Village Agents, taking the total to 60 Village Agents In addition, through a contract, the extension of the Village Agent project beyond its current lifetime of July 2015, maintaining the number of Village Agents at 60. This breaks down as follows, using Age Concern Hampshire budget information:

|                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Year 1</b>                    |                |
| £17,000 salary and on-costs      |                |
| £1,800 volunteer costs           |                |
| £1,800 staff travel              |                |
| £3,000 admin support             |                |
| £7,200 centre costs / management | <b>£30,800</b> |
|                                  |                |

|                                    |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Year 2 July 2015 - 16</b>       | <b>£60,000</b>  |
| <b>Year 3 July 1016-17</b>         | <b>£60,000</b>  |
| <b>Total April 2014- July 2017</b> | <b>£150,000</b> |

### **Recommendations**

- 1) From April 2014, a grant award of £30,800 be made to the Village Agent Project to increase the capacity by a further 15 Village Agents. This will take the total number of Village Agents across the rural areas of the County to a total of 60.
- 2) From July 2015 – July 2017, a contract up to a maximum value of £120,000 be made available to fund The Village Agent Programme. This £60,000 per annum to maintain 60 Village Agents across the county.

## **SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE AND REDUCING PRESSURE ON HOSPITALS**

### **Total funding sought £10,000**

Hampshire County Council has submitted a joint application to the Supporting Older People and reducing pressure on hospitals fund (led by the Cabinet office and NHS England), specifically for older people discharged from Southampton New Forest (Lymington) and Winchester hospitals. The application builds on and imaginatively develops the existing services provided to older people in their own homes after discharge from hospital. It will be concentrating on ensuring their good nutrition, having a warm home, reducing falling and improving their social support in order to prevent their need to be readmitted to hospital. This extra support will in many cases be provided by volunteers.

As part of the application we are requesting £10,000 match funding to work particularly in the rural areas throughout the New Forest and in the rural south of the Winchester District. This funding would be targeted at providing the extra mileage needed for volunteers to attend client visits; for client visits to continue for the full period of the project and to ensure travel to training can be made available for volunteers. This extra resource would ensure the older rural population is not prejudiced by where they live in receiving the additional support available.

## **COMMUNITY CHALLENGE FUND**

### **Total funding sought £35,000, plus an additional £15,000 available as a contingency**

The Community Challenge Fund provides grants of up to around £5,000 to community groups and organisations to support local activity in support of the rural priorities. Match funding by the local community in cash and in kind is required. The support offered by the Community Challenge Fund is highly regarded by local Members and village communities. The fund is administered via the County Council's grants database. Projects funded in 2012/2013 included support towards restoration of Stockbridge Town Hall, play equipment for Micheldever and Stratton pre-school, and support for Hampshire Country Learning school visits to farm businesses.

An additional sum of £15,000 is requested as a contingency in case the fund is particularly popular.

## **VILLAGE SHOPS: SURVIVING AND THRIVING**

### **Total funding sought £50,000**

#### **Background**

Hampshire County Council has for many years been an active supporter of village shops as the heart of their rural communities, and since 2008 it has run a well publicised programme of support for rural shops, using (primarily) capital funds ring-fenced for that purpose. It has also run three successful annual conferences for those who own and work in such shops, each of which have been well received and highly valued.

Since 2008, 33 grants totalling £417, 462.16 have been allocated to village shops around the county. This sum has leveraged a further £492,937 of private match funding from the owners, shop associations and managers of the shops concerned. Grants have been awarded for improvements designed to assist the shops in becoming more sustainable and future-proof, and through these improvements many local producers and suppliers have benefitted.

For example, the Management Committee of the rebuilt Community Shop in Woodgreen reported last year that “the shop is doing very well in its new premises, turnover has almost doubled, we have given our staff more paid hours, we are now able to stock much more chilled food, the coffee machine and seating area is well used by locals and visitors alike and our sales of local food has reached its target of 25%. We are also selling some local crafts, plants and flowers. So you can see that the move to new premises has enabled us to expand the business. We became a Local Information Point for the New Forest National Park Authority earlier this year which has proved useful as we now have quite a lot of visitors, cyclists particularly, some of which visit us regularly. We have a great staff and team of volunteers who take a pride in their shop.”

#### **The proposal: Similar - but Different**

This note constitutes a proposal that, during 2014/15 and 2015/16, Hampshire County Council should contribute £50,000 per annum towards a revised programme of support, future-proofing and improvement of rural shops in Hampshire, in line with HCC priorities.

A recent grant of £450 from Economic Development, working in partnership with the Plunkett Foundation, helped bring about a massive change of attitudes when a group of villagers were taken by minibus to see three inspiring community shops which they could potentially replicate in their own village. Previously unwilling to commit, the group came back and formed a community shop management association which is now working with ED and other partners on their hopes and plans to build a replacement shop on land owned by a village benefactor.

Such small sums can make a real difference. However, current terms of grant specify that only £1,000 may be made available as revenue funding to cover marketing costs, and none specifically on training, best practice transfer and influencing, or retail advice and guidance. ED proposes that any new grant funding allocated should allow more flexible packages of assistance to include any of those, with a suggested £3,000 ceiling of revenue funding, within an overall £20,000 maximum.

### **Fit with priorities**

Supporting the rural economy is a key priority for Economic Development, which employs an officer to work with partners on relevant rural based issues, and to manage grant applications to the Hampshire Village Shops fund.

Nationally, there is a move towards community management of village shops and pubs, and the whole concept behind the current proposal is to stimulate and support self-help in rural communities. This is particularly important now, because we are seeing, as a result of Post Office Ltd's Modernisation programme, an unprecedented period of 'churn' in ownership of village shops.

Village shops are much loved pillars of community infrastructure, places where a variety of services come together. Indeed, in Hambledon this year, the two local shops were acknowledged as playing a crucial role in maintaining communications and logistics during the winter flooding. The recently cemented relationship between the Village Agent in South Gorley, and the recipients of an HCC Village Shops grant at Hockeys Farm Shop, means that shop staff can keep the Agent informed. A final rural priority, transport, is partly addressed through this proposal, as products and services can be bought locally, or delivered by the shop, rather than through the need to travel.

### **Reason for application to the Rural Strategy Delivery Fund**

This application satisfies the main criteria of the Fund, being concerned with stimulating and supporting self-help, improving the rural economy and benefitting residents and businesses.

### **Costs and benefits**

The demand for grants continues, with applications currently in progress, or under consideration, for a further eight grants, totalling up to £100,000. Some of these can be covered by funds currently held, but the remainder, if / when submitted, would remain unmet.

Three examples of need:

| <i>Village shop</i>                   | <i>Planned improvements</i>  | <i>Planned outcomes</i>  | <i>HCC grant required</i> | <i>Match funding /Volunteer and in-kind support</i>   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|---|
| Abbotts Ann Community Shop            | Refurbished and extended café area inside shop, new EPOS system  | Customers staying longer; more efficient use of stock, staff and funds   | c£7,000                   | £7,000 (TVBC) 10% of total costs (parish council) 1000s of hours by 42 volunteers   |
| Meonstoke Stores                      | Build secure storage for stock, more accessible access (currently difficult) outside seating, delicatessen and bakery, coffee machine, website | Passing trade better catered for; fruit and veg more securely and attractively displayed; Website to function as community noticeboard; new products, many of them locally sourced | £20,000                   | Not yet established - need to talk with their parish and district councils; owner recently purchased shop                   |
| Preston Candover Shop and Post Office | New portable refrigeration equipment, shop fittings for existing shop prior to new build shop; contribution towards new build                  | Community runs the existing shop and PO; Wider range of locally produced foods; More cost-effective and low carbon refrigeration and chillers; eventually, new build shop          | £20,000 in two stages     | Final cost not established yet, but it is hoped that the land will be given free, and community shares are already pledged. |

**Value for money** - for HCC's £50K p.a, significant partner match funding is levered in, visible improvements in shops and services achieved, and excellent publicity, as best practice, for HCC.

## **THRIVING VILLAGES – BEST PRACTICE TRANSFER**

**Total funding sought £30,000**

### **Background**

Over recent years, there has been a focus on the changing nature of rural / market towns, which traditionally function as local service centres, or key settlements, for their rural hinterlands as well as their residents. In 2011, Mary Portas drew attention to the fact that many such towns are struggling to survive in today's challenging world, and produced a report outlining ways in which towns might be helped to revive and thrive into the future.

Through some of these means, where towns are proactively managed or 'curated', some towns have been shown to perform better, and demonstrate a greater vitality and prosperity than those which are not. In Hart, New Forest and Winchester districts, three town development officers have been working successfully with community groups and business organisations to develop the economy of five towns of different sizes in rural areas: Fleet, New Milton, Wickham, Bishop's Waltham and Denmead. Each officer has been funded by local authorities and businesses, and each town has seen clear improvements in economic activity.

For their residents, and the rural settlements surrounding these 'resilient' towns, the benefits are clear: 'their' towns generally have fewer shop closures, a wider selection of functioning businesses and services, more events and festivals, and are generally more pleasant places to be. However, further benefits to those rural hinterlands could also be experienced if similar techniques to those used in the towns were applied in villages and with rural businesses.

### **The proposal**

This note constitutes a proposal that, during 2014-15 (and potentially for the following two years) and in line with corporate priorities, Hampshire County Council should contribute towards the transfer of such best practice development / management activity into villages in at least three Hampshire rural districts, and allocate a maximum of £30,000 for this purpose.

### **Fit with priorities**

Supporting both rural communities and the rural economy is a key priority for Economic Development, employing an officer to work with partners on relevant town, village and rural based issues. Demonstrating its commitment, ED has used its own budget to part fund a Town Centre Manager in Andover over three years, and to contribute operational funding for the Town Development Manager in the three rural towns in Winchester District. Cllr Sean Woodward, Portfolio Holder for ETE, has also committed to supporting town and village development activity in each of the districts.

There is a close fit with HCC's work with Test Valley Borough Council on developing a Key Settlement approach to long-term planning, and also with other corporate priorities of community resilience and self-help (see examples below). Indeed, the whole concept behind this proposal is to stimulate and support self-

help. We have learnt from the 2001-2012 Small Rural Towns programme that this happens most effectively using the efforts of an experienced officer.

**Reason for application to the Rural Strategy Delivery Fund**

This application satisfies the Fund criteria, being concerned with stimulating and supporting self-help, leading to economic development in rural areas, so benefitting residents and businesses.

**Value for money**

Each of these applications, if funded, would benefit, both directly and indirectly, several village communities within a district. Each is matched by contributions from all three tiers of local government, and each demonstrates a strong commitment from local volunteers and organisations to work together for their locality. Through such combined applications, Hampshire County Council receives excellent value for money.

**What the grant funding could cover**

Two applications are shown in detail, giving examples of the achievements to date which could potentially be replicated in other rural locations.

**1. New Milton Villages – A New Perspective - supported by New Milton Town Council, New Forest District Council, Cllrs Mel Kendal and Alan Rice**

Aim: To utilise the experience of the Town Development Officer (TDO) in New Milton, assisted by the New Milton Town Partnership (NMTP) in working with organisations and businesses in the surrounding villages to develop the rural economy.

The need: New Milton is a market town, comprised of a series of small villages – Ashley, Bashley, Becton, Milton, Fernhill and Barton-on-Sea. On its borders are Tiptoe and Hordle, for which New Milton is the main service town. Some pockets of considerable social deprivation have been identified in the town centre and also in Ashley, Milton and Fernhill. Wages are low, particularly for women, many of whom are employed in the care sector, and accessing work may be problematic without personal transport, so there are many families struggling to cope.

| <i>Examples of good practice</i>  | <i>How it can be shared with villages / potential outcomes</i>   |
|---|--|
| NMTP organise large Craft Fairs in the town, each attended by 65 craft businesses. Many of these are based in the surrounding villages and, since the Fairs have been running, five new craft shops have opened up in the town, whilst others have set up online. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller craft markets, workshops and exhibitions can be set up in village halls</li> <li>• Crafters and artisans not yet selling in New Milton fairs or in craft outlets in the town can be encouraged to do so by TDO, using experience of others, with links to start-up advice and business support organisations</li> </ul> |
| Weekly street market set up by NMTP, and the Town Council   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of these small local producers are in the surrounding rural areas – TDO to</li> </ul>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| now run it. The TDO is commissioned by them to develop the market and bring in small local producers of high quality.   | work with New Forest Marque to encourage producers to supply town markets and sell in village halls and village shops, if not already doing so   |
| Events Workshop organised by NMTP drew in people from other towns and villages, with expertise from NFDC and HCC, offering guidance on road closures and planning issues. Silver Surfers courses run by NMTP in town have training hundreds of people.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar events could be run in villages, for example, on, say, community resilience or affordable housing</li> <li>• NMTP keen to bring Silver Surfers training to surrounding village halls and primary schools, focussing on online research into family history around the First World War</li> </ul>  |
| NMTC, NMTP and business group, Newbiz, set up by NMTP for town businesses, tackling empty shops, working with landlords to improve shop fronts, improving Christmas lights, floral displays and cleanliness, and producing a website to promote the town. Retailer support has been established for Digital High Street training. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NM website to include the surrounding villages, promoting significant features, events</li> <li>• Business and networking events open to businesses in surrounding areas; NMTP to encourage businesses to network in own village business groups</li> <li>• Villages promoted in Brand New Forest Campaign with NFDC</li> <li>• Widen access to Digital High Street training</li> </ul> |
| Careers Fair to be arranged by Newbiz and NMTP, with minibus planned to bring job seekers from outlying areas into the town.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local businesses can exhibit, work experience / job-matches arranged, leading to better school / business links</li> <li>• Village halls can host local business exhibitions</li> </ul>   |
| NMTP producing Town Guide, delivered to all homes and businesses in town and rural areas. It will now emphasise the Artisan theme and widen its remit.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Town Guide will include outlying rural areas, promote their distinctiveness and businesses, particularly artisan businesses, and include walks linking town and villages.</li> </ul>  |

**Funding required from this Fund: £10,000 per year (ideally for 3 years) for project support**

Match funding: £5,000 cash per year from New Milton Town Council, plus £5,000 in kind support

£8,000 cash per year from New Milton Town Partnership, plus >1200 hours in kind

Also available: grants towards specific events from New Forest District Council, and premises, advertising and services from local businesses.

## **2.Hart District Council proposal - Economic Vitality Support for Hart Villages**

### **(supported by Fleet Town Council and Cllr Sharyn Wheale)**

Aim To contribute towards the sustainability of Hart District Council's plan to strengthen town and village centres for a vibrant lively future, by supporting local community-led improvements in village centres, and using experience of successful working gained in Fleet.

The need: Hart District Council (HDC) has provided project support and funding to help the Fleet community produce a comprehensive Town Plan, now being implemented Fleet Future, the Town Team. The recent Food Festival attracted over 7,000 people and provided a marketplace and showcase for 50 small rural businesses from the surrounding rural areas. HDC would like to see successful initiatives such as this, achieved in Fleet, replicated, on an appropriate scale, in the rural villages. It has started with Odiham, which has one street and a population of around 5,000 and is expecting that other rural villages will follow when they see the benefits of self-help.

| <i>Examples of good practice</i>  | <i>How it can be shared with villages / potential outcomes</i>  |
|---|---|
| Fleet Food Festival 2014 – to become an annual event. This provided the opportunity to showcase local rural producers, whilst a previous Christmas Festival had drawn in 15,000 people.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a programme of community events which make people feel are part of their lives.</li> <li>• Odiham is considering a music festival; open gardens weekend; a street-food festival, and a series of specialist markets</li> </ul>   |
| Fleet's website was set up by a local business man free of charge, and a local video company made a promotional video at no cost. HDC has used its networks to promote activities in Fleet.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Odiham to create a comprehensive website, for visitor and residents' use, providing information on what to see and do, where to stay, events, shops, businesses and services.</li> <li>• It will seek similar support to that given in Fleet, from businesses within the village</li> </ul>  |
| Following a thorough benchmarking exercise, Fleet is aware that it needs to increase footfall into the town, and particularly to improve the amount of cultural and leisure activities into the town. It is working hard to identify new uses for buildings and open space in the centre of the town. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The location of Odiham, and other villages, on / near the Basingstoke Canal represents a real opportunity to attract more visitors - signage, interpretation boards etc needed</li> <li>• Odiham, and other villages, can benefit from the benchmarking exercise done in Fleet, directly, and through using learnt techniques in their own villages using volunteers.</li> </ul> |
| Odiham itself has already benefitted from a group of  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other villages can learn from the experiences of Odiham – for example,</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>independent rural businesses, InOdiham, set up to improve the economic prosperity of their village. The group has started a weekly Friday market, and is contacting New Milton to share learning experiences!</p> | <p>beautifying the village with bulbs and shrubs, using local suppliers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Odiham wants to promote its rural assets, heritage etc, to attract more day visitors and is working with the soon-to-be-re-opened George Hotel on how to attract more business visitors</li> </ul> |
| <p>Fleet Town Team carried out a Town Plan which involved input from thousands of its residents and businesses.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other villages in Hart encouraged to set up local partnerships, develop action plans to increase economic vitality, maximising involvement.</li> </ul>   |

**Funding required from this Fund: £10,000 per year (ideally for 3 years) for project support**

Match funding: >£15K pa from Hart District Council for a project officer  
£5,000 cash per year from Odiham Parish Council, plus in kind support

Also available: >1200 hours in kind from InOdiham group, sponsorship and advertising etc