

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	23 July 2015
Title:	Rural Delivery Strategy: Approvals for Funding
Reference:	6626
Report From:	Director for Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to make outline proposals for Rural Delivery Strategy project funding for 2015/16. These proposals have been developed in accordance with the revised Rural Delivery Strategy priorities approved by Cabinet in March 2014.
- 1.2. Approval is also being sought for community grant applications through the Community Challenge Fund.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Revised priorities for the County Council's Rural Delivery Strategy were agreed by Cabinet in March 2014 (Report 5684) with priority actions supporting community resilience, challenging rural isolation and loneliness, rural transport, self-help, communications, and economic development. Following review by Councillor Andrew Gibson and Departmental colleagues in December 2014 it is proposed to maintain these priorities.
- 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 and they are a good fit with current corporate priorities for the organisation. The proposals have emerged through Departmental submissions to the Rural Co-ordination Group. The opportunity has also been taken to brief the new Rural Affairs Lead Member, Councillor Rob Humby, who is supportive of the content of this report.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The Rural Delivery Strategy budget for 2015/16 is £200,000.
- 3.2. Several new project proposals have been received, for consideration by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources. Full details are at Appendix 1. Subject to approval, it is proposed to proceed with these projects. The total funding available is £275,000, comprising £200,000 of new funding, plus a balance of £75,000 from 2014/15. Bids shortlisted total £224,495. Funding recommendations total £220,795

4. Proposals

- 4.1. **Flood alleviation grants, £65,000.** A fund is proposed to support small scale community-led flood alleviation schemes. Grants would normally be in the region of £10,000 unless there are exceptional circumstances. Applicants would need to meet set criteria which will be available online at the County Council's grants database. In summary, the criteria for acceptance would be a demonstrable benefit to people and property, without any increase in risk elsewhere. Schemes must have parish council support and be consented by the Environment Agency and Hampshire County Council. Match funding would be desirable, and projects must represent good value for money. Applicants would apply online through the County Council's grants database.

4.1.1 Approval is sought for two grants at this stage:

- a) *Stockbridge, Stockbridge parish council, £25,000:* Work would be undertaken by the Houghton fishing club to protect properties in Stockbridge. Match funding has been confirmed by Test Valley Borough Council, which has undertaken due diligence. The project is supported by the Environment Agency.
- b) *Chilbolton parish council, £4000:* To improve drainage from the village towards the River Test, involving new ditches and laying pipes under tracks, through land managed by the parish council.

4.1.2 Under normal circumstances approval for these grants will continue to be sought through the Executive Member for Policy and Resources (EMPR), but for urgent requests, where match funding could be lost, approval is sought for decisions to be delegated to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services in conjunction with the Rural Affairs Lead Member. Any such approval would be reported retrospectively to EMPR.

4.2. Children's Services initiative

- a) *Schools inter-generational project, £38,000:* A project led by Children's Services, in partnership with Adult Services, seeks to use rural schools to tackle rural isolation. One beacon school would be selected and supported to develop as a 'community school', working with the Schools

Landscape Team to develop a five year strategy. Another ten rural schools would be supported to develop a whole-school approach to inter-generational activities. And all schools would have access to the intergenerational gardening project pack, which has already been developed. Other suggestions for additional inter-generational work would be shared through briefings and events.

4.3. **Economic Development initiative**

- a) *Hampshire village shops fund, £50,000*: A further £50,000 has been requested in support of the Village Shops grant fund, administered by Economic Development in ETE. While current reserves stand at £71,000, the majority of this is likely to be spent during the next few months.

4.4. **Adult Services initiatives**, supporting older people in rural areas:

- a) *Falls prevention interventions for older people, £3,700*: The total cost of this project is £7,400, and it is proposed to support this project, subject to 50% NHS joint funding. The number of falls is increasing and is a major cause of injury and accidental death in older people. Long term participation in falls prevention classes is a proven way of reducing falls and hospitalisation. Funding would pay for 4+ new 'Steady and Strong' trainers to cover selected rural areas, subsidise the classes and help pay for transport costs. Potential partnership opportunities with Hampshire Fire and Rescue will be explored further.
- b) *Village Agents extension. £50,445*: As at 29 April 2015 there are 49 active Village Agents with a further two pending, making a current total of 51 towards the existing total of 60 by November 2015. The additional funding will allow for a further 40 Village Agents to be recruited and supported for a further year from November 2015 to November 2016 and will take the total to 100 Village Agents across Hampshire.
- c) *Support for men experiencing social isolation, £13,650*: This initiative recognises that men can experience a lack of social interaction, problems with the transition to retirement, and mental health issues. It would comprise two strands: 'Men in Sheds' based in two rural villages for men who are becoming isolated and lonely, which would build on existing initiatives in Gosport and Havant. An additional strand would be cookery classes for older men, run by trained volunteers.

4.5. **Community Challenge Fund grants**: These are small grants for communities seeking to support community engagement. Funding has been previously agreed (Decision Report 5940). Grant applications are managed by the County Council's Rural Programme Manager, who works with applicants and Departmental colleagues to identify the best way of supporting these initiatives, and sources of external funding.

- 4.5.1 Since the grant fund was re-established in July 2014, 17 proposals for grant funding have been brought forward to the County Council. Of these, one was approved in a previous report, three have been rejected (usually on grounds

of 'double funding'), and six have not progressed following further discussion with applicants. For two grants, more appropriate sources of County Council funding were identified, and grants have been secured that way. Others are still pending, with additional information awaited.

- a) *Hampshire Country Learning, £5,000* (grant reference 7983): This charity runs events for school children to visit farm estates to learn about modern farming and wildlife management. Substantial resources are provided by the estates themselves, and excellent feedback is received from schools attending. This organisation has been supported previously. A grant from the County Council would help pay for incidental costs such as portaloos and hand washing, together with volunteers' travel costs. 18 days of events are held in Hampshire each year at venues including Beaulieu, Highclere, Rotherfield Park and Manydown.
- b) *Nether Wallop parish council, £3,000* (grant reference 8799): A grant would help prepare a community bid for the Five Bells pub which has been closed for nearly two years. The funding would go towards seeking legal and professional advice for a business plan. Community finance has been raised, and a charitable trust has been approached for a grant. Payment of this grant would be subject to equal match funding being agreed by the parish council.

4.6. **Grants approved by officers:** It was agreed in Decision Report 5684 that grants of less than £1000 would be approved by officers following discussion with the Lead Member, using delegated powers, and be reported to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources retrospectively. The following grants have been approved in this way:

- a) *Campaign to Protect Rural England, Hampshire branch, £998* (grant reference 8719): Towards cost of running an annual conference.
- b) *Blackmoor phone box, Selborne: conversion to a lending library, £500* (grant reference 8815): The parish council requested a grant towards the cost of converting a redundant red telephone box to a lending library.
- c) *Whitehill lunch club, £400*: Funding towards the cost of community transport for club members, following withdrawal of Adult Services funding. Club members already pay £2 a week towards transport, raising £1,200 towards community transport.
- d) *Winchester Cycle-fest, £5000*: Additionally, one larger grant has been approved. With agreement of the Executive Member for Policy and Resources, the Director for Culture Communities and Business Services agreed a grant towards the running costs of the Winchester Cycle-fest event on 7 June 2015 (Officer Decision Record 6604). The event supports local businesses and attracts many residents living in rural Hampshire.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- 5.1. The Executive Member for Policy and Resources approves the projects set out in paragraph 4 of this report and Appendix 1.
- 5.2. That approval be given for urgent requests, where match funding could be lost, to be delegated to the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services in conjunction with the Lead Member for Rural Affairs with any such approvals reported retrospectively to EMPR.

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

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	Yes
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
Hampshire County Council's Rural Delivery Strategy	6410	February 2015
Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals	6282	December 2014
Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals	5940	July 2014
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

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.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The proposals are expected to have a high positive impact on people living in rural areas, particularly older people. No negative impacts are anticipated.

Revised priorities for the County Council's Rural Delivery Strategy were agreed by Cabinet in March 2014 (Report 5684) with priority actions supporting community resilience, challenging rural isolation and loneliness, rural transport, self-help, communications, and economic development. It is proposed to maintain these priorities. An equality impact assessment of specific projects or funding requests is requested when necessary.

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 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 the 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. Climate change is expected to increase occurrence of severe weather.

DETAILS OF FUNDING PROPOSALS

HCC Dept	Project Title	Proposal	Amount requested £	Funding recommendation £
ETE	Flood alleviation grants	<p>To support the implementation of small-scale community-led rural flood alleviation schemes. In some instances it may be possible to provide flood alleviation grant funding for feasibility work to carry out the initial investigations. Grants would normally be in the region of £10,000.</p> <p>The criteria will be available online at the County Council's grants database and set out under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood alleviation benefit; • Support locally from the Community and Parish/Town Councils; • Environmental improvements; • Consents from Hampshire County Council (HCC) and/or Environment Agency (EA); • Partnership funding and value for money; and • Timescale. 	65,000	65,000
	Village shops funding	Village shops are often the social hub of a village, reducing social isolation and outward travel, a point of contact for Village Agents, providing local employment and keeping money circulating locally – but even the most successful shops do not generate high levels of income. The Hampshire Village Shops fund provides capital for	50,000	50,000

HCC Dept	Project Title	Proposal	Amount requested £	Funding recommendation £
		investment to 'future-proof' such shops, as well as a small revenue sum for marketing and promotion of the new products and services. This new application will allow further grants to rural shops, buying items such as energy-efficient refrigeration equipment to stock more local produce, refurbishing 'tired' interiors, and allowing communities to build, set up and run their own community shops where the only alternative option would be closure. Maximum grants, which must be matched, are £10,000 for privately run businesses, and £20,000 for community shops.		
Children's Services	Schools inter-generational project	<p>Schools to be further developed to become health and well being hubs, and benefit the wider school community. Driven by a coordinator, the project will provide a three tiered strategy to improving intergenerational work across rural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal: All schools in rural areas have access to the intergenerational gardening project pack and other activities promoted through briefing sheets. • Targeted: The Intergenerational project coordinator will work with a small group of ten rural schools to develop a whole school approach to developing intergenerational activities • Individual: A 'beacon school' to develop a Five Year Strategy for developing the school grounds with a focus on it as a community resource. 	38,000	38,000
Adult Services	Falls prevention for older people	Training programme for 4 new 'Steady and Strong' trainers to set up new exercise classes in rural areas. Funding to subsidise the	7,400	3,700

HCC Dept	Project Title	Proposal	Amount requested £	Funding recommendation £
		classes (so Trainers have time to build numbers) and support older attendees with limited finances through help to meet any transport costs. 50% funding would be offered, subject to NHS match funding.		
	Village Agents extension	Funding for a further 40 Village Agents to be recruited and supported for one year from November 2015 - November 2016, taking the total number of Village Agents from 60-100 for the County.	50,445	50,445
	Support for men experiencing social isolation	Training volunteers to deliver cookery classes for groups of men Supporting two rural villages to open Men in Sheds for local older men	13,650	13,650
TOTALS			224,495	220,795
CCBS	Community Challenge Fund:	From funding pot previously agreed (Report 5940, 24.7.2014)		
	Hampshire Country Learning	To enable countryside school visits	5,000	5,000
	Nether Wallop parish council	Towards costs of preparing community bid for the Five Bells pub, which has been closed for nearly two years. Grant would be conditional on equal match funding from parish council.	3,000	3,000