

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

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
<b>Date:</b>	22 April 2016
<b>Title:</b>	Rural Delivery Strategy: Approvals for funding
<b>Reference:</b>	7282
<b>Report From:</b>	Director for Culture, Communities and Business Services

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**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to outline proposals for Rural Delivery Strategy funding for 2016/17. The proposals have been developed in accordance with the revised Rural Delivery Strategy priorities approved by Cabinet in March 2014.
- 1.2. This paper outlines three proposals for consideration, including a contribution to the Parish Lengthsmen Scheme and two applications to the Community Challenge Fund.

**2. Contextual information**

- 2.1. The revised County Council Rural Delivery Strategy priority actions were agreed by Cabinet in March 2014 (report 5684). These include supporting community resilience, challenging rural isolation and loneliness, rural transport, self-help, communications, and economic development.
- 2.2. The Community Challenge Fund was established to support community led projects that help deliver against the Rural Delivery Strategy priority actions. The re-launch of the Community Challenge Fund was approved by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources at his Decision Day in July 2014 (report 5940).
- 2.3. The funding proposals outlined in this report all fit within the priority actions and build on existing initiatives to maximise impact and use of available resources. All proposals have been reviewed by Departmental colleagues and the Lead Member for Rural Affairs, Councillor Rob Humby, who is supportive of the recommendations.

### 3. Finance

- 3.1. The Rural Delivery Strategy budget for 2016/17 is £252,000 (this includes a balance of £52,000 carried forward from 2015/16).
- 3.2. The Community Challenge Fund budget for 2015/16 was £50,000. £18,600 was awarded in 2015/16 leaving a balance of £31,400 to be carried forward to 2016/17. Two new applications have been received for consideration, for funding totalling £10,500. Section 5 of this report also refers to spend against the Community Challenge Fund budget.
- 3.3. One additional scheme contribution has been received for consideration, to be allocated from the Rural Delivery Strategy budget. This is for funding totalling £30,000.

### 4. Funding proposals

- 4.1. *Parish Lengthsmen scheme extension, £30,000*: the Parish Lengthsmen Scheme was established in 2009 involving 19 parishes and grew to 99 parishes by 2015. The scheme provides funding for parishes to undertake a number of duties around the highway. The County Council's Countryside Access Plan 2015-25, includes an action to explore the potential for further Parish and Town Council involvement in the management and improvement of the rights of way network. A proposed extension to the Lengthsmen scheme, for parishes taking a pro-active interest in the management of rights of way, has been considered by the Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee on 30 October 2015 (report 6990), and it was agreed to recommend to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, that a contribution of £30,000 be accepted to support this. The benefits of the Lengthsmen scheme in promoting community resilience and a culture of self-help in rural areas is recognised and funding is sought to support this extension to the scheme.
- 4.2. **Community Challenge Fund**: these are small grants to support groups and organisations in rural Hampshire and small market towns. Projects must deliver measurable results against one or more of the scheme priorities: community resilience, rural transport, self help, communications and economic development. Funding approval is sought for two applications to this scheme.
  - a) *Winchester Market Town Development, £8,000 (grant reference 10556)*: the Market Towns Development Project works to maintain the vibrancy and viability of the local economies and communities in four market towns across the Winchester District (Bishops Waltham, Wickham, Denmead, Alresford).

Funding totalling £10,000 was awarded to Winchester City Council in 2014/15 (report 5940), to support the establishment of this programme, which has already delivered benefits to residents and businesses in the market towns. A grant has been requested to help pay for the additional resources needed to develop the existing programme, to maximise the benefit to each town and create stronger links with their surrounding communities (e.g. holding events and activities making use of town

resources, establishing a local business forum and encouraging use of local businesses by local people).

Officers would support additional County Council funding being awarded to the programme to ensure sufficient capacity building to enable local people to do more for themselves in the future. The programme is also supported by Winchester City Council (£14,000 committed), as well as the Parish and Town Councils themselves (£22,000 committed), so the outcomes of the project are considered to be good value for money.

- b) *Graze Festival, £2,500 (grant reference 10709)*: an annual family, food and music festival is held in Twyford, run entirely by volunteers, with all profits donated to the Graze Fund, to which local groups can apply for funding towards capital projects. Funding is sought for the 2016 Festival to support the provision of a mobile kitchen to be used for cookery demonstrations throughout the day to showcase some of the best local produce and provide an opportunity for local food suppliers to reach a mixed audience of approximately 3,000 local people. The event has the support of Hampshire Fare who would provide the expertise to run the demonstrations throughout the day and have links to a wide network of local suppliers. The event offers a great opportunity to support local suppliers and has the support of the local County Councillor.

4.3. **Grants approved by officers:** it was agreed in Decision Report 5684 that grants of less than £1,000 would be approved by officers, using delegated powers, following discussion with the Lead Member. Grants approved in this way are then reported to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources retrospectively. One grant has been approved since January 2016:

- a) *Village Shops Conference, £919* – the Hampshire Village Shops Conference was held in February 2016 at Braishfield Village Hall and Pantry. The event was free to attend and provided the opportunity for representatives of both private and community run shops to gain advice and expertise on matters relating to running a village shop. The event also had support from corporate sponsors.

## 5. Community Challenge Fund review

5.1. The Community Challenge Fund was established in 2009 and subsequently re-launched in 2014 to reflect the revised priorities of the Rural Delivery Strategy. On the advice of the Lead Member for Rural Affairs, a review of the scheme has been undertaken to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the scheme in supporting small scale projects and initiatives in rural areas.

5.2. Consultation with the Hampshire Association of Local Councils and Action Hampshire confirmed that there is still a demand for funding for community projects in rural areas and of the potential benefits of the scheme in helping to deliver this. As the County Council faces further cuts, there are also recognised benefits of the scheme in meeting corporate objectives, especially through the schemes potential to support the culture of self-help and promote collaborative working.

5.3. Overall the scope of the scheme and its criteria were still found to be relevant, therefore only minor changes have been proposed to improve the administration of the scheme and its promotion.

- a) *For applications over £1,000, introducing three closing dates per year, to correspond with scheduled Decision Days.* This follows the process already established for other County Council grants.
- b) *Introducing a minimum grant of £500.* Due to the officer time involved in processing grants, smaller grants are not considered to be cost effective. This change is also in line with other County Council grants.
- c) *Improving information available to potential applicants.* The information available for potential applicants is limited to the formal criteria and eligibility. Based on this information applicants may find it difficult to see how their project will deliver against the scheme priorities. A list of example projects and case studies will therefore be made available on the website.
- d) *Improving scheme promotion.* In recent years it is apparent that promotion of the scheme has been limited. A schedule of promotion will be developed to allow appropriate lead in times to application deadlines to include direct contact with potential applicants, press releases, promotion through Hampshire Association of Local Councils, Action Hampshire, County Councillors and other established networks.

5.4. It is proposed that the above changes be implemented, ready for the scheme to be re-opened in May 2016.

## **6. Rural programme review**

- 6.1. The Lead Member for Rural Affairs has initiated a review of the aims and objectives of the rural programme, previously agreed by Cabinet in March 2014.
- 6.2. It is proposed that a report be presented to Cabinet in Summer 2016, outlining any revised aims and objectives and the future direction for the rural programme.
- 6.3. A work programme and funding proposals for the allocation of the 2016/17 budget will also be developed and presented to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources for consideration.

## **7. Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that:

- 7.1. The Executive Member for Policy and Resources approves the projects set out in paragraph 4 of this report.
- 7.2. The Executive Member for Policy and Resources endorses the re-opening of the Community Challenge Fund in May 2016, with the minor changes resulting from the scheme review, as outlined in paragraph 5 of this report.

7.3. The Executive Member for Policy and Resources endorses the review of the rural programme, with a view to presenting the outcome of this review to Cabinet during Summer 2016.

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

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	Yes
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	Yes
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	Yes

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals	7153	January 2016
Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals	6626	July 2015
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	November 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	January 2010
Rural Delivery Action Plan	865	August 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:**

- a) The proposals are expected to have a high positive impact on people living in rural areas. No negative impacts are anticipated.
- b) 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. 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 in rural communities.