

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs Select Committee
Date:	4 November 2010
Title:	Rural Delivery Action Plan: Community, Leisure and Culture
Reference:	2261
Report From:	The Director of Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs

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1. Summary

- 1.1. This report updates Members on progress achieved through the Community, Leisure and Culture theme of the County Council's Rural Delivery Action Plan and outlines the anticipated future direction of the programme. Members received a report on progress on this cross-cutting Action Plan on 22 April 2010, together with more detail about the Food Forestry and Farming theme - one of the seven strands within the plan.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. With over 85% of Hampshire's land area and 23% of its population classed as rural, it is important for Hampshire County Council to identify how it can best support its rural communities, deliver its range of statutory and discretionary services effectively in these areas and achieve the best value for money.
- 2.2. In July 2008, Cabinet agreed a vision for rural Hampshire: "Rural communities that are resilient and sustainable socially, economically and environmentally."
- 2.3. In order to achieve maximum benefit from improved corporate working, action plans were developed covering cross-cutting themes rather than following solely conventional Departmental boundaries. Cabinet agreed 120 individual actions in April 2009 to meet its priorities for rural Hampshire. These were identified by Departments, and funded from within Departments' own resources.
- 2.4. In addition to these themed action plans, the Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs approved £154,000 funding for 6 projects in 2009/10 which could not be taken forward without additional resources, and which would test new and innovative ways of delivering rural services. All but one of these projects is now underway or complete, and interim progress was reported to Cabinet in January 2010.

- 2.5 A Community Challenge Fund was allocated £10,000 of this sum to enable parish councils and community and voluntary groups to bring forward small-scale projects for improvements in their communities. Funding for nine projects was matched by resources generated locally, and eight of the projects were completed by the end of 2009/10.
- 2.6 The Executive Member has a further £200,000 available to support rural projects in 2010/11. Of this, £179,900 was approved for 18 specific projects on 2 July 2010, including a further £10,000 for the Community Challenge Fund and a grant of £18,000 to Community Action Hampshire to support the Village Halls Advisor post. All the projects are required to focus on deliverable outcomes, to lever in additional funding (including 'in-kind' contributions) and rely on partnership working.
- 2.7 The project funding is in parallel with the themed action plans progressed within Departments' existing resources. The CCRA Select Committee received a progress report on the overall Rural Delivery Action Plan in July 2009, and was updated on progress on the Food, Farming and Forestry Action Plan in April 2010. This report now considers how the Action Plan for Community, Leisure and Culture has been taken forward since July 2009, including new activities for 2010-2011.

3. The Community, Leisure and Culture Action Plan: Performance and Highlights

- 3.1 The Community Leisure and Culture (CLC) Plan is largely led by the Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs Department, working with other Departments such as Childrens' Services and Property, Business and Regulatory Services. An illustration of projects underway is at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Overall, good progress has been made with this Action Plan. 70% of the 61 new actions are proceeding as planned and a further 25% are broadly on track. Only 5% (4 projects) are likely to miss their targets, mainly due to withdrawal of external funding or partners changing priorities.
- 3.3 The following paragraphs highlight some of the activities underway or planned. Although the report focuses particularly on the new actions for 2010-11, it also explains how some of these build on the lessons and successes of those undertaken earlier.
- 3.4 A wide range of community projects is progressing well. For example the importance of community buildings is recognised through funding for a Village Halls Advisor to advise village hall managers across the county. Linked with this is the Community Buildings Fund, which enables Hampshire residents to maintain and upgrade parish and community buildings, and which levers in a minimum of twice the CCRA funding through external investment. Support for this fund from the Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs improved halls in the Wallops and St Mary Bourne. Additional resources for this fund from the Executive Member and CCRA are available for 2010/11.
- 3.5 Community led planning (CLP) is a further focus of this action plan. Following initial slow progress due to lack of funding, the 'rural toolkit' project was re-configured and expanded. A cross-departmental group has now been set up to steer three inter-

linked elements to create a landscape framework for CLP; develop a web-based 'rural toolkit', and carry out a pilot in two villages for residents to participate in local decision-making through project funding. Both Hampshire Association of Local Councils and Community Action Hampshire are supporting these projects. Other community projects have also been taken forward, ranging from improving a 'community support' self-help website to funding for a volunteer co-ordinator to increase the volunteer base.

- 3.6 Better joint corporate and partnership working and community involvement are key factors in the success of the action plan projects relating to the countryside, sport and outdoor learning. For instance, the Small Grants Scheme, whereby parish and town councils can bid for small grants to help them improve countryside access, has proved so popular that it has been extended to cover the local management of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- 3.7 More effective partnership working has resulted in improvements to rights of way and countryside sites. Partnership funding has also been agreed for the Countryside Education Trust at Beaulieu; to extend the work of the Play Strategy officer to rural areas, and to improve access to sport by young people in rural areas. Access to the countryside for disabled people will be enhanced through grants for disabled toilet facilities at a county farm and by a play trail suitable for all abilities at Manor Farm, both supported by grants by the Executive Member.
- 3.8 Several projects are seeking to improve access to learning opportunities in Hampshire's rural communities by a variety of delivery methods. These include outreach classes and family learning programmes in pilot villages, using a minibus to transport older learners to classes; art workshops in schools; ICT classes for older learners, and using Forest Bus for targeted learning.
- 3.9 A project which will address the below-average use of museums by rural schools has been supported by the Executive Member with external match funding. Mobile libraries were involved in the 'Summer Reading Challenge, two of them covering very rural areas in the county, and this was linked with displays of museum objects in village schools. Customer surveys of mobile libraries have been conducted and, together with fine-grained socio-economic data for rural areas, will be used to inform the library service structure review.
- 3.10 Village fetes are the focus for open air theatre and other arts events, and Hog the Limelight, the professional touring arts programme, continues to benefit rural and urban edge communities. Rural communities are also involved in the Living Links project - a community archive website which is open to all regardless of location, and community groups interested in being involved are given support and training. National accreditation as an 'Archive Pace Setter' for innovative projects has been received for the Treolar School project, which is revisiting collections and exploring disability and its perception.
- 3.11 A key priority area for the County Council is support for forestry, food and farming. The Community Leisure and Culture action plan complements the action plan for this theme by supporting local food and drink producers and outlets. A guide and website has been launched on family friendly pubs, most of which are rural, and local food

sales have been increased at the County Council's countryside sites.

4. Challenges for the Future

- 4.1 A significant challenge in future will be to endeavour to 'rural proof' services in the context of budget cuts, and to better focus targeting of resources. 'Rural proofing' is a process for ensuring that policies take account of rural circumstances and needs. It will be essential to use data and local knowledge to improve targeting and minimise the adverse impact of cuts: this workstream is underway using the Mosaic classification, supported by local data. There is additional focus on improving partnership working to make the most effective use of scarce resources, and by building on the high level of community engagement and expertise in rural communities.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 There has been good progress to date with implementing the Community, Leisure and Culture Action Plan, together with the separate funded rural partnership projects. However, in the context of budget cuts, there will be considerable challenges ahead to optimise future delivery of services to rural communities. There will a focus on ensuring that as many adjustments to services as possible are 'rural proofed' before implementation. There will be a specific focus on maximising external investment, and on further improving partnership working.
- 5.2 The impact of this work is reflected in the feedback received from organisations operating within rural communities. The profile and reputation of Hampshire County Council and its work in this area has developed very considerably and has been recognised externally, including by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development). It will be a significant challenge to sustain this level of profile in the forthcoming financial climate.
- 5.3 Future progress will hinge upon sustaining this activity, maintaining the evidence base to optimise targeting of scarce resources, and continuing to develop innovative ideas both internally and with all those organisations operating in, or supporting, our rural communities.

Integral Appendix A

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

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

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Cabinet Reports		7 July 2008
Cabinet Reports	497	27 April 2009
Executive Member for Rural Affairs	865	10 August 2009
CCRA Select Committee	1553	22 April 2010
Executive Member for Rural Affairs	1799	2 July 2010
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>		<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>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.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

Integral Appendix B

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- a) Successful implementation will reduce inequalities by improving service delivery in rural areas and increase access to services. Please refer to full Equalities Impact Assessment.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- a) None noted.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?**

More effective and efficient service delivery is expected to reduce the County Council's carbon footprint and energy consumption.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?**

Adaptation to climate change is a key theme in this strategy.

APPENDIX 1**COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND CULTURE ACTION PLAN: SAMPLE OF ACTIVITIES, NOVEMBER 2010**

Objective	Target group / area	External bodies / HCC Services involved	Programme outcomes
Outreach engagement with rural communities – services working together to deliver improved services to rural communities	Across rural Hampshire	Rural communities. CCRA: Arts, Archives, Museums, Libraries service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampshire Record Office talks and visits in locations across the county to audience of 2000+. Almost half the talks are in rural venues. • Army ancestry events and military film shows as part of 'Air, Land and Sea' book awards. • Hog the Limelight professional touring arts programme for rural/urban edge communities where no such activity currently exists. 48 villages have selected 85 events. • Short talks and reminiscence for older people. • Developing reading skills for children in rural areas by using mobile libraries for Summer Reading Challenge. Focus on very rural areas in north Hampshire, Test Valley and New Forest. • Supported Summer Reading Challenge by displaying Museum objects in village schools

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£104,000 Community buildings fund (comprising £84,000 from CCRA and £20,000 from Executive Member).	Across Hampshire	Communities. CCRA Community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides match funding for communities upgrading halls and community centres, enabling them to apply for external funding. Levers in minimum 2 x external investment. • Working with Village Halls Advisor based at Community Action Hampshire (funded by HCC following withdrawal of Govt funding).
Roll out Leading EDGE project to rural Hampshire - Alton, Test Valley, New Milton to increase participation by 14-25 age group.	East Hampshire. Test Valley, New Forest		<p>Alton Numbers of young volunteers engaged: 37 (includes 26 NEET*) Panel meetings: 4 Events/activities delivered: 1) E2e Sculpture Project at Allen Gallery 2) Exhibition in a Day at Gilbert White's House</p> <p>Andover Numbers of young volunteers engaged: 52 (includes 14 Young Carers) Panel meetings: 5 Events/activities delivered: 1) Young Enterprisers Day at Harrow Way School 2) Andover Museum Carnival entry 3) Puppet making Workshops at Andover Museum Andover</p>
Guided walks for older people. Scheduled on website.	Across Hampshire		Held throughout the season, up to 20 participants per walk.

Objective	Target group / area	External bodies / HCC Services involved	Programme outcomes
Use Forest Bus for targeted learning in New Forest.	New Forest	Forest Bus children's charity Hampshire Learning	Family Learning being delivered in Bransgore including Numeracy (leading to achievements in Basic Skills national tests) Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities programme delivered with progression to Family Learning programmes. Food Hygiene course planned.
Andover Family Learning outreach classes in St Mary Bourne, Clatford and Clanville, Overton, Middle Wallop and West Tytherley	Test Valley	Hampshire Learning	Courses successfully delivered.
Taking IT learning to rural communities	Older learners Basic skills / employment Families Across Hampshire	Age Concern Community centres Bishop's Waltham parish council HCC: Adult Services Children's Services Hampshire Learning, Libraries	Older learners IT classes in New Forest and rural Hart. 104 learners. Fleet library using minibus to transport older learners from villages to computer skills classes in town. Pub used during library refurbishment.
To ensure that the Sport Unlimited 5 hour offer programme includes provision for children and young people in rural communities. By 31.3.2011. Sport England funding		Community clubs Sport England Sport Service	Projects in East Hants, New Forest, Rushmoor and Test Valley funded through Sport Unlimited to improve access to community sport by young people in rural areas.

Objective	Target group / area	External bodies / HCC Services involved	Programme outcomes
Support for community facilities – pubs.	Across Hampshire	Pubs Winchester City Council Hampshire Tourism Partnership Tourism team	'Family friendly pubs guide' brochure and website launched March 2010. (Lead Winchester CC) £10k bid to Hampshire Tourism Partnership for 'food and drink campaign' website. Developing bid for Rural Development Programme for England (EU funding) for support for local pubs.

*NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training