

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs
Date of Decision:	2 July 2010
Decision Title:	Funding for Rural Delivery Strategy projects
Decision Reference:	1799
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to determine the allocation of funding for projects arising from priorities identified by Hampshire County Council's Rural Delivery Strategy. £200,000 funding for rural projects has been agreed for a second year. The paper identifies 16 potential projects for consideration for funding, which accord with the priorities agreed by Cabinet in April 2009.
- 1.2 This paper also updates on progress achieved by the six rural projects funded by the Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs during last financial year, (Decision Report 10 August 2009, report no. 865). Interim progress with these projects was reported to Cabinet on 25 January 2010 (report 1127). All but one of these projects are now underway or complete.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The focus of Hampshire County Council's Rural Delivery Strategy is on improving the quality of services delivered by Hampshire County Council and its partners in rural areas, and increasing value for money.
- 2.2. Cabinet was updated on the Strategy's development and progress in June 2008, March and April 2009, and January 2010. Cabinet also agreed the priority focus for this work, which is listed at 5.1.

3. Funding for 2009/10 projects: performance and lessons learned

- 3.1 In 2009/10 the Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs funded six rural projects (Decision Report 10 August 2009, report no. 865). Interim progress with these projects was reported to Cabinet on 25 January 2010 (report 1127). See also Appendix 2.

- 3.2 Of the six projects, three are complete: Community Buildings Fund, 'emotional literacy support', and 'gifted and talented children'. The latter two projects are now being sustained within existing Departmental resources. Two of the remaining three projects are underway – Little London broadband, and Hants Direct mobile plus [now called Out of Town Plus], but have progressed more slowly than anticipated. The 'local food distribution' project has been unable to progress as a decision is still awaited on an external funding bid. A funding decision is now expected in autumn 2010.
- 3.3. Nine community-led projects were awarded funding from the £10,000 Community Challenge Fund, of these 8 were completed and grants claimed by the end of 2009/10. The fund proved particularly effective in helping lever in external resources, both financially and in kind. Programmes such as this are highly popular and cost effective in enabling communities to unlock resources at a local level.
- 3.4. These funded projects are testing new and innovative ways of delivering rural services. They are also helping deliver the County Council's objectives for rural service delivery. In terms of the distribution of support the map in Appendix 1 shows the spread of grants, advice and projects undertaken or underway as at December 2009.
- 3.5. All funded projects have drawn in substantial amounts of external match funding. Of the funded projects it is estimated that £154,000 of County Council investment will help facilitate a combined investment of £670,000 in rural areas across the County.
- 3.6. In terms of the impact achieved the County Council has received some very positive feedback with some of the responses associated with the support given presented in the Cabinet report, January 2010.
- 3.7. A review of lessons learned was made after the first year, and incorporated into the approach for the current year. These would include streamlining the Community Challenge Fund to slightly reduce staff time involved. It may also be possible to simplify the presentation of the small grant schemes to simplify customer access.
- 3.8. Significant progress has been made with the funded rural partnership projects. The impact of this work is reflected in the feedback that is being 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. Future progress will hinge upon sustaining this activity and continuing to develop innovative ideas both internally and with all those organisations operating in, or supporting, our rural communities.

4. Budget position

- 4.1. For 2010/11 financial year the Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs has available a further £200,000 of funding to support rural projects. Of this, £179,900 has been identified for the specific improvement projects listed in this report. The small

under-spend will be available for contingencies. This funding is in parallel with the departmental action plans which list projects that are being taken forward within existing resources.

- 4.2. It is proposed to allocate £10,000 of this sum to a Community Challenge Fund to enable parish councils and community and voluntary groups to bring forward small scale projects or improvements in their communities (see also 6.7). Additionally, a £18,000 grant has been made available to Community Action Hampshire to support the Village Halls Advisor post (see also 6.4).

5. Funding Criteria

- 5.1. Projects are required to meet one or more of the following priorities agreed by Cabinet in April 2009.
- Supporting sustainable rural communities. (To include affordable housing, rural broadband, access to services, supporting volunteering, and community engagement.)
 - Providing effective rural transport
 - Farming, food and access to the countryside
 - Economic prosperity
 - Climate change, including renewable energy, and making better use of the county's wood-fuel resource.

Projects also need to meet Local Area Agreement targets where relevant (detailed in the Cabinet report of 27 April 2009, report no. 497), Corporate Plan priorities, and areas of concern identified in the Corporate Improvement plan. They also need to be consistent with rural proofing guidance.

- 5.2. All projects are required to focus on deliverable outcomes and to be implemented within a reasonable time-scale. Projects were requested to lever in additional external funding, including 'in-kind' contributions, though this has been very challenging in the current economic climate. Project leads were also asked to identify how their projects would continue once this one off funding has ceased in order to identify interventions that should be sustainable in the future.

6. List of Projects

- 6.1. 19 outline bids were submitted to the Executive Member by the deadline of April 2010. These were reviewed by the Executive Member in conjunction with officers, who took forward 18 bids for detailed consideration and revision as necessary. As a result the projects, summarised below, have now been finalised and are the subject of the recommendations set out in section 9.
- 6.2. OPAL (Older People's Area Link) Village Agents pilot
Led by Adult Services, a network of local volunteers will be set up to become a trusted local presence who is able to link older people with the information and services they need. The Village Agents concept has been subject to a national evaluation by the Department of Work and Pensions, which showed that it is a highly effective model.

This project will link directly to priorities around supporting volunteering, community engagement and supporting sustainable rural communities.

Funding requested: £20, 000, Other funding: Adult Services £20,000

6.3. Community Buildings Fund

This fund enables residents to maintain and upgrade parish and community buildings throughout Hampshire. The fund is highly popular and heavily over-subscribed, so additional investment is sought. Substantial leverage of external funds is achieved, as only a maximum of one third of the total cost is paid, the remainder being raised by the community from other sources. The programme is led by CCRA (Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs Department).

This funding bid meets the funding criteria in supporting sustainable rural communities and access to services.

Funding requested: £30,000 Other funding: CCRA Dept £84,000

6.4. Village Halls Advisor

Following the withdrawal of Defra funding in 2008/9, Hampshire County Council stepped in to fund this role, based at Community Action Hampshire, which provides advice to village hall managers across the county. In order to safeguard this role, this funding has been agreed.

The funding meets the funding criteria in supporting sustainable rural communities and access to services.

Funding agreed: £18,000 Other funding: from CAH as in kind office costs.

6.5. Community-led planning (3 projects combined)

In order to maximise the benefits that can be achieved, the Executive Member has requested that three project applications relating to community-led planning (CLP) are to be drawn together. He has also requested that a project board be set up comprising officers from the County Council's Chief Executive's, Culture Communities and Rural Affairs (CCRA) and Environment Departments to further embed effective corporate working and maximise value for money. Representatives from Community Action Hampshire and Hampshire Association of Local Councils will be invited to participate.

There would be three elements to this project:

Work-stream A: creating a landscape framework for CLP

Working with Community Action Hampshire, this would update the national CLP guidance by enabling evaluation of landscape quality as it contributes to 'sense of place' and local distinctiveness. This phase would be led by the Environment Department, and would feed in to Workstream B.

Work-stream B: Rural toolkit

The County Council's web-based support and advice for CLP will be updated to provide a resources base of information and good practice examples. It will assist parish plan groups to develop and deliver plans for their communities, and to tie these in effectively with the County Council's resources. This would be led by CCRA.

Work-stream C: Rural project funding

Building on Work-stream B, and supported by Community Action Hampshire, a pilot project in two villages would develop a process for residents to participate in local decision making through project funding. Due to staffing constraints this work-stream could not start until later in the financial year. CCRA would lead this work-stream.

This application meets the funding criteria of supporting community engagement and volunteering and supporting sustainable rural communities.

Funding requested: £35,000 (plus £6,000 for 2010/11) *Other funding:* In kind estimated: £10,000; Environment £5,000; CCRA £6,000; Community First East Hants; Community Action Hampshire £4,800.

6.6. Tackling rural fly-tipping

'Project Flynet' would focus additional County Council resources on tackling the scourge of illegally dumped rubbish and waste. It will be led by CCRA Countryside Service, Environment Waste and Resources Management and PBRS Regulatory Services, and include external partners. Accredited Community Safety Officers will target fly-tipping hotspots, at times when incidents are known to take place, particularly at night, and at weekends. Targeted surveillance and CCTV will be used as necessary. Training and support will be also be offered to partners.

This project meets the funding criteria for supporting sustainable rural communities. Action to address fly-tipping was a high priority among respondents to the County Council's 2008 consultation on the Rural Delivery Strategy.

Funding requested: £10,000. *Other funding:* in kind support expected from Hampshire Constabulary, Country Land and Business Association, National Farmers Union, Forestry Commission and Environment Agency.

6.7. Community Challenge Fund

This initiative would enable parish councils and community groups to apply for funding up to £1000 to undertake projects in their communities that meet the funding criteria. This concept was trialled last year, with a £10,000 budget, and was successful and popular with residents. The project would be led by CCRA.

This initiative would meet the criteria for community engagement, volunteering and supporting sustainable rural communities.

Funding requested: £10,000 Other funding: match funding, including 'in kind'.

6.8. Local Children's Partnerships

Led by Children's Services, Local Children's Partnerships are being set up across Hampshire to reduce the effects of poverty and disadvantage on children and young people. The additional investment requested in this bid would enable a pilot in the western part of New Forest district to have a particular focus on rural areas. The programme's emphasis is on mitigating the effects of poverty, reducing teenage pregnancy, improving the educational attainment of vulnerable children, and reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training ('NEETs').

The project would meet the funding criteria for sustainable rural communities and access to services.

Funding requested: £20,000. Other funding: £10,000 from Children's Services Department; in addition to 'in kind' funding from all Local Children's Partnership members (staff time etc).

6.9. Village shops best practice event

An event would 'showcase' the best practice achieved by the 16 village shops that have been awarded funding under the Village Community Grants Scheme. Other village shops, many of which are struggling financially, would have the opportunity to learn from these successes. A village shops best practice guide would also be published. The project would be led by the Economic Development office.

This would link directly to the priority around access to services.

Funding requested: £10,000 Other funding: in kind from village shops

6.10. Little London broadband

The Executive Member for Rural Affairs awarded a grant of £30,000 to this project in 2009 (Decision Report, 10 August 2009), and while good progress has been made, the project has become more complex than originally anticipated, and a contingency of £10,000 is requested.

Funding requested: £10,000 Other funding: £30,000 funding from community, substantial in-kind support.

6.11. Guide to setting up a rural transport initiative

Led by Environment, a self help guide would enable communities to develop solutions to local travel needs. It would identify different transport options available, providing case studies of successful transport initiatives. It would also provide a directory of other transport

information and links to websites. A CD/DVD would also be produced and workshops held to publicise the initiative.

It would link directly to the priority around providing effective rural transport.

Funding requested: £15,000 Other funding: £15,000 Environment Dept, with in kind contributions from parish councils and other partners.

6.12. Museums and rural schools

Led by CCRA, this project would address below-average use of museums by rural primary schools, which is due largely to the cost and difficulty of travel. Rural schools would be given an opportunity to develop their own 'museum in the classroom', assisted by young volunteers from the 'Edge in Closer' programme which was targeted at 'NEETs'. Teachers will be trained to undertake 'school ground archaeology'. School visits to local museums will also be funded. It is anticipated that 7 schools will be involved in New Forest and Test Valley.

This project would link to the priority around access to services.

Funding requested: £4000. Other funding: £8,000 VMatch funding for Edge in Closer.

6.13. Gifted and talented children

Led by Children's Services, this project would be an extension of a project piloted in primary schools in 2009/10 with funding from the Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs. Funding is sought to extend the programme to 5 secondary schools and Alton College. It would enable gifted and talented children in rural schools to engage in joint learning projects with pupils at other schools, and would improve provision for more able children in rural schools.

This project will link directly to the priority around access to services.

Funding requested: £5,700. Other funding: in kind support from Children's Services and East Hampshire Education Improvement partnership.

6.14. Improved disabled loo facilities for county farm

Led by Property, Business and Regulatory Services (PBRS), and supported by Adult and Children's Services, this project would provide expanded use of County Farms by children and adults with learning difficulties. It would fund two portaloos with full access capability, and also two hand washing units. The equipment can be taken off the farm to events where requested. Match funding from County Farm tenant, PBRS and Adult Services.

The project would link to priorities around access to services and farming, food and access to the countryside.

Funding requested: £1200, Other funding: Tenant £1000; PBRS & IT £500; Adult Services: £500

6.15. Small Grants Scheme – biodiversity

Building on the success of CCRA's Small Grants Scheme for countryside access, this Environment Dept project would provide funding to allow communities to better manage key wildlife sites of county importance. Grant funding would be backed by professional support and advice from the Ecology team.

It would support priorities for community engagement, support volunteering and sustainable rural communities.

Funding requested £5000. Other funding: £5000 Environment Dept; £5000 CCRA, £15,000 Parish/Town Councils

6.16. Manor Farm play trail

Young people who have physical disabilities, and their families, are disadvantaged in visiting and enjoying the countryside due to the lack of easy access facilities. The play trail would encourage these disadvantaged groups to explore the countryside actively and safely whilst promoting access and learning to the countryside. There would be no charge for its use, and the play trail would be suitable for people of all abilities. Of the 150,000 people visiting the park annually, 10,000 of these are people with disabilities. The project would be led by CCRA.

This project would link to the priority of access to the countryside.

Funding requested: £32,000. Other funding: HCC Countryside and Arts Services 23,000, Playbuilder £20,000; Aiming High for Disabled Young People £30,000.

6.17. Improving sales opportunities for milk from County Farms

A feasibility study is envisaged to identify additional local market opportunities for locally produced milk, both supporting the local economy and reducing 'food miles'. The EU Leader programme has expressed interest.

This project would link directly to the priorities for farming and food.

Funding requested: £4,000 tba Other funding: Bid for EU Leader funding tba

6.18. Community Arts project

Led by CCRA, this pilot project would assist Hurstbourne Tarrant Community Development Trust with the creation of a programme of cultural activities. A 'how to' toolkit would be developed, so other communities could also benefit. The knowledge gained would identify a cost effective and professional package of cultural events which could

achieve good box office returns, increased use of village facilities, and improved community cohesion.

This project would link to the funding criteria of supporting community engagement and volunteering.

Funding requested: £5,000 Other funding: £10,000 from HCC Arts Service, plus in-kind support from Community Development Trust, Audiences South and Hurstbourne primary school.

7. Risks

- 7.1. Inevitably there are risks associated with these projects but they have been assessed as part of the feasibility process and there is a high degree of confidence that they can be managed or overcome.
- 7.2. There is a risk that not all external match funding will be obtained as anticipated, meaning projects cannot go ahead without additional HCC funding or significant reduction in the impact of specific projects. There may also be unexpected delays in external approval of funding sought. Much of the funding has been identified or is close to being secured - (assessed as low level risk).
- 7.3. All projects are reliant on partnership working. Should partnerships not flourish there is a risk of projects not being completed. The partnerships involved are both internal and external but build upon established and tested relationships rather than solely new and untried arrangements - (assessed as low level risk).
- 7.4. Reputational damage if any project fails to deliver: any pilot project or innovation must carry some risk of failure and this underpins the ability and willingness to try new approaches. These projects have been assessed against specific criteria and priorities and link strongly to the expertise and experience of colleagues across the organisation. (As such this risk is assessed as low / moderate). In the event of any underspend or failure of an individual project, consideration will be given to reallocating any residual funds across the other projects in accordance with the priorities agreed by Cabinet.
- 7.5. The progress of funded projects will be monitored by the corporate rural group and reported to the Executive Member on a regular basis.

8. Timescale

- 8.1. The projects identified are ready for immediate implementation and although there will be variation within each project, the majority of projects are scheduled for completion by April 2011. A number of the most complex projects will run on into next financial year.

9. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive Member for Economic Development and Rural Affairs supports the following projects from the Rural Strategy budget:

Project	Total project value	Grant proposed
Village agents	£40,000	£20,000
Community Buildings Fund	£200,000 approx	£25,000
Community led planning	£60,800	£35,000
Tackling rural fly-tipping	£10,000	£10,000
Community Challenge Fund	£30,000	£10,000
Children's partnerships	£10,000	£18,000
Village shops event	£10,000	£10,000
Little London broadband	£80,000	£10,000
		contingency
Rural transport guide	£30,000	£15,000
Museums and rural schools	£12,000	£3,000
Gifted and talented children	£5,700	£5,700
County Farm: disabled loos	£3,200	£1,200
Small Grants Scheme - biodiversity	£45,000	£5,000
Manor Farm play trail	£105,000	£9,000
County Farm milk sales	£tba	£ tba
Community Arts project	£15,000	£3,000
TOTAL	£656,700*	£179,900

* This is a projected figure including anticipated contributions from partners, so the actual figure realised will be higher or lower than this. Includes £80,000 total investment in Little London broadband which was also counted in 2009/10.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

LINKS TO THE CORPORATE STRATEGY			Yes	No
Hampshire safer and more secure for all			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)				
Maximising well-being			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)				
Enhancing our quality of place			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate Business plan link no (if appropriate)				

OTHER SIGNIFICANT LINKS:		
Links to Previous member decisions:		
Title	Ref	Date
Rural Delivery Strategy for Hampshire County Council	Item 5.a1 – 5.a5	July 2008
Rural Delivery Strategy for Hampshire County Council – Consultation and Development	Item 8(i) – 8(ii)	March 2009
Rural Delivery Action Plan for Hampshire County Council Decision Report	Item 7 865	April 2009 August 2009
Rural Delivery Action Plan for Hampshire County Council – Progress and Performance	1127	January 2010
Direct Links to Specific Legislation or Government Directives		
Title		Date

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	

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.