

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
<b>Date:</b>	09 March 2017
<b>Title:</b>	Rural Delivery: approvals for funding
<b>Reference:</b>	8090
<b>Report From:</b>	Director for Culture, Communities and Business Services

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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report 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. The proposals include a request to support the delivery of the Village Agents Scheme and two grant applications to the Community Challenge Fund - flood alleviation grant for funding totalling £8,500.

### 2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The revised County Council Rural Delivery priority actions were agreed by Cabinet in March 2014 (report 5684). These include supporting community resilience, 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 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). It was approved in July 2015 (report 6626) to allow grant applications specifically to support the implementation of small scale community led rural flood alleviation schemes, including feasibility work where appropriate.
- 2.3. The proposals have been reviewed by Departmental colleagues, Councillor Edward Heron, the Lead Member for Rural Affairs, and Councillor Rob Humby, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, who are 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). £196,662 of this budget has been allocated, approved by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources at his Decision Days in April 2016 (report 7282), June 2016 (report 7483) and September 2016 (report 7747), leaving an unallocated balance of £55,338.
- 3.2. An additional £3,700 previously allocated in 2015/16 has been returned, leaving a total unallocated budget of £59,038.
- 3.3. One proposal has been received for consideration, for funding totalling £58,000, to be allocated from the Rural Delivery budget 2016/17.
- 3.4. The Community Challenge Fund - flood alleviation grant budget for 2016/17 is £29,500. Two new applications for flood alleviation funding have been received for funding totalling £8,500 (see paragraph 5).

### **4. Funding proposal – Village Agents Scheme**

- 4.1. The Village Agents scheme was established in 2012 supported by a Rural Delivery grant. It was subsequently funded by Adults' Health and Care, with an additional grant from the Rural Delivery budget to support the expansion of the scheme in 2014/15 (report 5940).
- 4.2. The scheme is managed by Adults' Health and Care, and delivered by Age Concern Hampshire. It currently supports 60 volunteer Village Agents in rural communities across the County, assisting vulnerable older people to access information they need on issues such as day care, foot care, computer training, company at meal times, transport for shopping and medical appointments, finding reputable tradespeople and help around the home. Since the scheme was established in July 2012, up to July 2015, Village Agents have completed 7,681 volunteer hours, which includes face-to face interactions with 13,743 people.
- 4.3. In 2016 Adults' Health and Care changed its approach through the Supportive Communities programme. This resulted in the adoption of a Community Connectors model to support communities to become better connected, using an asset based approach to improving well-being and inclusivity. In order to develop this approach a new grant was developed with a broader scope than the Village Agents scheme. Several proposals were presented, including the Village Agent scheme, however a new proposal which focuses on both communities of interest (people with mental health problems as connectors) and communities of place (New Forest) was successful.
- 4.4. There is however seen to be great value in continuing to support the delivery of the Village Agents scheme and Adults' Health and Care is willing to continue to work with Age Concern Hampshire to manage the scheme, ensure the delivery model is cost effective, sustainable and compliments the ongoing Supportive Communities programme.
- 4.5. As the Community Connectors model is to be run as an 18 month pilot, it is recommended that the Village Agents scheme continues to be supported

during this time. Measures will be taken during the pilot period to facilitate the incorporation of Village Agents into the new model of delivery if appropriate.

- 4.6. The cost to deliver the scheme for this 18 month period is £108,000. A grant of £50,000 has already been awarded from the Rural Delivery budget (report 6626) to support the scheme (carried forward from 2015/16). It is therefore recommended that £58,000 be awarded from the Rural Delivery budget for 2016/17, to allow the full cost of the scheme to be funded for the proposed 18 month period.

## **5. Community Challenge Fund – flood alleviation grant applications**

- 5.1. The Community Challenge Fund offers small grants to support groups and organisations in rural Hampshire and small market towns. Some specific funding is available to support small scale community-led flood alleviation schemes, which can include funding for feasibility work to carry out initial investigations. Projects must: show a demonstrable benefit to people and property, without any increase in risk elsewhere; have support from the local community and Parish/Town Council; have the necessary consents from the Environment Agency and Hampshire County Council. Some partnership funding should be in place, and projects must represent good value for money. Funding approval is sought for two applications to this scheme.

### *a) Brockenhurst Parish Council, £4,500 requested (grant reference 13198)*

Brockenhurst Flood Action Group is requesting funding towards a project to help improve understanding of the Lymington River Catchment, and ultimately find solutions to reduce the incidence of road closures due to flooding, which regularly impacts residents, businesses and visitors to the area.

A partnership is in place between the Parish Council, Hampshire County Council, Network Rail, the Forestry Commission and landowners. The Flood Action Group aims to encourage more coordinated action between these partners going forward. Funding is therefore being requested for catchment modelling and expertise to interpret these results, which can be used to inform the action of partners. Funding will also be used to help improve the expertise and understanding of both Flood Action Group members and Councillors, primarily by attendance at relevant conferences and workshops.

Project Co-ordination to the value of £9,900 is being committed in-kind and small contributions are also being secured from Brockenhurst Parish Council (£300), Boldre Parish Council (£100) and Sway Parish Council (£100). Hampshire County Council Highways is also contributing to the project in-kind.

The project is considered to be well thought out and has the support and involvement of the appropriate parties. The great potential for the results of this project to be used to secure future funding and inclusion in a number of national initiatives is also acknowledged. It is therefore recommended that the full £4,500 requested is awarded.

*b) St Mary Bourne Parish Council, £4,000 requested (grant reference 13308)*

St Mary Bourne Flood and Emergency Group is requesting funding towards a project to carry out essential remedial work on the St Mary Bourne section of the Bourne Valley to mitigate any risk of future flooding.

The Bourne Valley has a history of flooding caused by high groundwater levels, emerging springs and surface water run-off from heavy rainfall. As part of a Defra Pathfinder Scheme, Hampshire County Council, the Parish Council Flood Action Group, the Environment Agency, Wessex Chalk Streams and Rivers Trust and other partners, have worked together to identify issues and concerns and prepare an action plan. Assessments have also been undertaken to provide a more detailed understanding of key locations on the action plan, and how interventions at these points can best contribute to manage drainage in the valley and reduce the risk of flooding.

In consultation with the Environment Agency a key section of about half a mile of riverbed has been identified for regrading, which if completed will make a significant difference to the river flow. The funding requested will be used to complete the work needed on this section.

The value of the proposed regrading work is acknowledged and the works can be implemented without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. It is therefore recommended that the full £4,000 requested is awarded. Match funding is to be provided by the Parish Council (£2,000).

## **6. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Executive Member for Policy and Resources:

- 6.1. Approves the proposal to support the delivery of the Village Agents Scheme, set out in paragraph 4 of this report, for funding totalling £58,000.
- 6.2. Approves the applications to the Community Challenge Fund, set out in paragraph 5 of this report, for funding totalling £8,500

**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	7747	September 2016
Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals	7483	June 2016
Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals	7282	April 2016
Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals	6626	July 2015
Rural Delivery Strategy funding proposals	5940	July 2014
Hampshire County Council's Rural Delivery Strategy	5684	March 2014

**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:**

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? Putting effective flood alleviation measures in place would reduce the amount of energy required to alleviate flooding emergencies through measures such as pumping of flood water and reduce the resources needed for recovery after an event.
- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? The severity and frequency of extreme weather events that often cause flooding is linked to the changing climate. Initiatives to alleviate flooding will take this into account. The initiatives proposed also support the culture of self-help and community resilience in rural areas.