

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	18 July 2017
Title:	Rural Delivery Strategy – rural delivery funding
Report From:	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 funding for 2017/18. The proposals have been developed in accordance with the Rural Delivery priorities approved by Cabinet in March 2014.
- 1.2. The report outlines two proposals for consideration, including a contribution towards a Hampshire Fare project and the Parish Lengthsmen scheme.

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 funding proposals presented in this report fit within the priority actions and build on existing initiatives to maximise impact and use of available resources. The proposals have been reviewed by cross-departmental colleagues, Councillor Edward Heron, the Assistant to the Executive - Rural Affairs Champion, and Councillor Rob Humby, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, who are supportive of the recommendations.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The Rural Delivery budget for 2017/18 is £200,000. £50,000 of this budget has already been allocated, approved by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources at his Decision Day in June 2017.
- 3.2. Two new proposals are presented for consideration, to be allocated from the Rural Delivery budget. This is for funding totalling £40,000.

4. Funding proposals

4.1. *Parish Lengthsmen scheme, £30,000 recommended*

The Parish Lengthsmen scheme was established in 2009 involving 19 parishes and grew to 138 parishes in 2016/17. The scheme provides funding for parishes to undertake a number of duties around the highway. In 2015 an extension to the Lengthsmen scheme was considered by the Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee (report 6990) to include duties on rights of way. In 2016 the Executive Member for Policy and Resources agreed to provide a £30,000 contribution from the Rural Delivery budget to support this extension (report 7282), in recognition of the benefits of the scheme in promoting community resilience and a culture of self-help in rural areas.

For 2017/18 there are 140 parishes signed up and an additional 41 on the waiting list. All are expected to perform duties on both highways and rights of way according to parish priorities. As the County Council continues to strengthen its relationship with parish and town councils, the scheme provides an excellent platform for this. It also builds on the feedback from the series of workshops held with parish and town councils in September 2016, which revealed many are willing to take on greater responsibility.

In recognition of the value of the scheme, in both supporting rural communities and strengthening the relationship with parish and town councils, it is recommended that support towards the scheme is continued with the provision of a £30,000 contribution from the Rural Delivery budget.

4.2. *Hampshire Fare website development, £10,000 recommended*

Hampshire Fare is one of the most successful and active food and drink related groups in the UK. It has over 400 member companies, employing over 16,000 staff and with a combined turnover in excess of £400 million.

Hampshire County Council established Hampshire Fare as a local food promotion project in 1998. The project, which proved to be highly successful, led to the formation of Hampshire Fare as a Community Interest Company in 2009. The County Council continued to support the organisation via a series of Service Level Agreements, the latest of which ceased in December 2016. In February 2017 the Assistant to the Executive – Rural Affairs Champion and members of the Economic Development Team met with Hampshire Fare to review the County Council's support and it was agreed that in future this should be restricted to specific projects that will help to develop the organisation.

Hampshire Fare has subsequently submitted a proposal for support towards a new website with improved quality and functionality. The current website has over 6 million page views per year and the consumer e-newsletter has over 14,000 subscribers. It is however over 10 years old and is run on a platform that is out of date, with no further opportunities to develop functionality, add sections, improve search capability, or improve performance on mobile devices. The potential to develop the website is vital in meeting the growing membership, which has increased from 150 members in 2012 to over 400 in

2017. These members are predominately businesses based in rural Hampshire and Hampshire Fare offers a platform to support their growth.

As an example, the printed version of the Local Produce Guide provides an excellent introduction to Hampshire's leading food, drink and hospitality businesses; however the restricted capabilities of the current website means this cannot be delivered online. The proposed new website will have an improved search functionality enabling consumers, chefs, restaurants and hoteliers to quickly and easily find out about suppliers of local produce.

The Economic Development Team has reviewed the proposal and believes it will provide a much needed improvement that will support food and drink producers and related supply chains in Hampshire. This will in turn support the County's leisure, tourism and hospitality businesses and there will be added benefits in the complementary links between the Hampshire Fare and Visit Hampshire websites. In addition, a new high quality Hampshire Fare website will add value to the overall 'Hampshire' brand and perceptions of what the County has to offer. The total cost of providing the new website is £21,588 and Hampshire Fare has requested support of £20,000 towards this. On the basis of a reasonable expectation of matched funding from their own resources, it is recommended that the proposal is supported, with a £10,000 contribution from the Rural Delivery budget.

5. Recommendations

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

- 5.1. Approves the proposal to provide a £30,000 contribution to the Parish Lengthsmen Scheme, as set out in paragraph 4.1 of this report;
- 5.2. Approves the proposal to provide a £10,000 contribution towards the development of a new Hampshire Fare website, as set out in paragraph 4.2 of this report.

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:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Rural Delivery Strategy: rural grants	N/A	June 2017
Rural Delivery Strategy: funding proposals	7282	April 2016
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.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
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. 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? Hampshire Fare promotes local producers, in turn helping to reduce food miles and encourage consumption of foods that are in season locally.
- 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 Parish Lengthsmen Scheme supports the culture of self-help and community resilience in rural areas.