

Urgent Decision Record – Applications for LEADER Transitional Funding

Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking the decision	Cllr Alan Cockburn Deputy Leader
Date of Decision (not before: 28 th June 2013)	28/06/2013

Decision Taken

That I, as Deputy Leader:

- 1) Approves the funding application being submitted to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for £30,000 to £40,000; and
- 2) Approves that the County Council continues as the Accountable Body for this funding until the end of the financial year 2014/15, if it were to be successful.

Reasons for Decisions

Option 1 – do nothing. This would restrict the current Central Warwickshire LEADER programme in accessing transitional funding and is not recommended.

Option 2 – allow another Council to take on the role of Accountable Body. Whilst this may need to be considered if we reach a position of wishing to draw up an application for a new programme in 2014-2020, only current LAGs are being invited to apply for transitional funding at this stage. There is nothing to be gained from WCC giving up its Accountable Body status at this time and no risk to WCC maintaining this status in overseeing the transitional funding

Option 3 – WCC maintains its Accountable Body role until the end of the current programme and transitional period (31st March 2015). Transitional funding asks for no more than matched time to be contributed to the application. The administrative burden falling on WCC during this period will be minimal. The officer match time is required to help take the key activities forward in the transitional year. These include reviewing the previous programme; assessing the governance of the LAG going forward; building relationships with LEAs, all borough and district councils and the community and business sectors; preparatory work for a new strategy. Much of the work will be continued by the Programme Manager at Garden Organic and this time forms a large part of the costs included in the application for transitional funding.

It is recommended that the proposal in 3.3 is approved and that WCC agree to act as Accountable Body until the end of the transitional period.

Background Information

The current LEADER programme is part of the 2007-2013 European RDPE (Rural Development Programme for England) programme and is 50% funded through European funding and 50% through Defra.

The Central Warwickshire LEADER programme is delivered by Garden Organic at Ryton-on-Dunsmore with WCC as the Accountable Body. The contract between Warwickshire County Council (WCC) and AWM (and subsequently Defra) was signed in September 2009. The current end date of the programme is March 2014.

The programme has an overarching scope of social cohesion against three themes: community growing; community arts; and linking the community to land based rural industries. These were decided after an extensive consultation period with the public through events and online collaboration. The LEADER ethos is very much one of “bottom-up” development with significant community buy-in a pre-requisite to project approval.

In terms of definition, Central Warwickshire is defined as Rugby and Warwick rural areas (but not urban areas). North Warwickshire Borough Council has a separate programme that they administer.

During the course of the last three years, about 175 different projects have been delivered by the programme across almost all the villages of Central Warwickshire at a project cost of about £4,500 per project. We have been able to do this through contracting organisations to deliver a number of smaller projects. Examples of our projects are below:

- Live and Local had two projects. County Arts delivered community-led projects including the mural work at the Ryton A45 underpass. They have also had a Rural Cinema network taking films into village halls.
- Community Orchards – 24 separate orchards have been created in schools and villages over the last three years. These include contributions towards benches, fences and fruit presses for juicing. The benefit of this project will be seen for generations to come.
- Festival of the Harvest – this takes place every autumn at the Show ground at Stoneleigh. It involves bringing primary school children (Years 6 and 7) in touch with their rural heritage. It has been supported by a number of local farmers over the years and is hosted by Warwickshire Rural Hub.
- Upgrades to village halls – a number of groups using halls have benefitted from functional upgrades to their halls for lighting, stage, sound, theatrical curtains etc. These include Lapworth, Shrewley, Cubbington, Pailton and Churchover.

Financial Implications

As outlined in the report.

Report Author	Mark Morris
Head of Service	Louise Wall
Strategic Director	Monica Fogarty
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Alan Cockburn

Checklist

Urgent matter?	Yes – the final deadline for submitting the application to Defra is Friday 12 th July 2013, although they have asked for them sooner so that decisions can be made and funds allocated. To go through the standard decision-making process would put the Council at risk of missing that deadline.
Confidential or Exempt? (State the category of exempt information)	N/a
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of Reports considered - please include link to copy of the report

Published report by report author:
<http://democratic.warwickshire.gov.uk/cm5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/645/Meeting/2931/Committee/551/Default.aspx>

List of Background Papers - please include a contact for access to background papers

None.

Members and officers consulted or informed – please include any comments

Deputy Leader – Cllr Alan Cockburn
 Legal – Sian Stroud
 Finance – Liz Firmstone
 Democratic Services – Georgina Atkinson

Consent for Urgency Procedure – Councillor Richard Chattaway, Chair of Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee