



## Cabinet 23 October 2008

### Distribution of funding for the Rural Action Plan 2008-2011 (Nov 08/07)

#### 1. Summary and Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.1 The St Edmundsbury Rural Action Plan for 2008 to 2011 was approved by the Cabinet on 19 March 2008 (minute 180 refers). Funding for the projects within the Rural Action Plan is to come from the agreed revenue and capital provision in the 2008/2009 budget and beyond. This report seeks approval for the distribution of this funding.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the funding allocations for the St Edmundsbury Rural Action Plan, detailed in Appendix A of Report Z305, be approved; and
- 2.2 That the Economic Development Manager be given delegated authority to authorise these payments in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Rural Affairs, subject to minor changes, for example due to estimated project costs.

#### 3. Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 The recommendations meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:-
- (a) Corporate Priorities: *'to improve the safety and well-being of the community'; 'to secure a sustainable and attractive environment'; and 'to create a prosperous local economy';*
- (b) Cabinet Commitment: *'Rural Services';* and
- (c) Vision 2025: St Edmundsbury will be a place:-  
*V:E2: where the rural economy is thriving with an increase in small local industry and diversification resulting in an increase in employment and improved services;*  
*V:E6: with an appropriately skilled, productive, trained and adaptable workforce and where there are strong links between the education sector and local industry;*  
*V:H1: which has an affordable range of housing to meet the needs and demographic profile of the community;*  
*V:H5: where first time buyers are able to buy a home in their own communities;*  
*V:L1: where its distinctive cultural heritage and range of quality accommodation help to attract visitors all year round;*  
*V:L2: where the wide range of accessible leisure and cultural facilities on offer provide opportunities for all sectors of the community;*  
*V:L6: where cultural activities are valued and contribute to wider social wellbeing through the promotion of good*

*health, community cohesion and positive social behaviour;*

*V:S4: which values, protects and enhances the distinct landscapes and biodiversity within the borough;*

*V:S6: where people have access to and use a sustainable integrated transport system;*

*V:S8: where communities and businesses have benefited from adopting a low carbon approach to energy;*

*V:T1: where all businesses will be able to offer their employees a personalised travel plan based on available sustainable transport options;*

*V:T3: where all sectors of the community have access to a high quality, reliable, affordable and frequent public transport network; and*

*V:T5: where pedestrians and cyclists have priority in all village and town centres to promote healthy and safe exercise.*

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<p><b>4. Key Issues</b></p> <p>4.1 The Rural Action Plan contains 35 projects, that fit within four linking initiatives:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) to create quieter and safer village roads;</li> <li>(b) to improve community accessibility;</li> <li>(c) to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment; and</li> <li>(d) to promote stronger and sustainable rural communities.</li> </ul> <p>4.2 The Rural Action Plan was approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 March 2008 (Report Y606 refers) and adopted by Cabinet on 19 March 2008 (minute 180 refers).</p> <p>4.3 The projects are to be completed during the period 2008 and 2011 and Appendix A details the estimated/actual costs for each of the projects for 2008 to 2011.</p> <p>4.4 Since some of the projects are still in the very early planning stages or have not yet been started, several of the figures are estimated, and subject to change.</p>
<p><b>5. Other Options considered</b></p> <p>5.1 To decide not to implement a Rural Action Plan or to decide not to allocate any resource to it would be detrimental to three of the main Corporate Priorities and to the Cabinet Commitment to Rural Services.</p>
<p><b>6. Community impact</b> <i>(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and diversity issues)</i></p> <p>6.1 <u>General</u></p> <p>6.1.1 The purpose of the Rural Action Plan is to achieve active, sustainable and thriving communities in peaceful and unspoilt countryside.</p> <p>6.2 <u>Diversity</u></p> <p>6.2.1 An integral part of the Rural Action Plan is to promote community spirit and social interaction. The desire is for all sectors of the community to work together to achieve a sustainable community.</p>
<p><b>7. Consultation</b></p> <p>7.1 Consultation for the Rural Action Plan was carried out from August through to November 2007, via <i>Community Spirit</i>, <i>Rural News</i>, the Parish Conference, the Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership, <i>Members' Bulletin</i> and the website.</p>
<p><b>8. Resource implications</b> <i>(including asset management implications)</i></p> <p>8.1 Funding for these projects is to come from an earmarked reserve of £100,000, the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme, the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund (budget code C792) and other capital allocations (including budget code C120): Rural minor improvements and budget code C002: Conservation of historic areas, and existing budgets.</p> <p>8.2 There are no on-going revenue costs associated with implementing the Rural Action Plan.</p>

**9. Risk Assessment** *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

9.1

<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of Risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual Risk</b> (after controls)
	High/Medium/Low		High/Medium/Low
Failure to deliver on political and public commitments in rural areas as promised by administration	Medium	Having a dedicated officer to manage the Rural Action Plan, planning and managing communications, and maintaining involvement with stakeholders	Low
LGR may affect the delivery of the Rural Action Plan	Low	If LGR proceeds, St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Rural Action Plan will be managed as part of transition	Low
Funding initiatives fail to deliver expected results	Medium	Careful preparation and brief specification and careful project management will help ensure desired outcomes are achieved	Low

**10. Legal or policy implications**

10.1 Under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities are empowered to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area. This power may be exercised in relation to the whole or any part of the authority's area and it includes the power to incur expenditure. When exercising the power, the authority must have regard to its strategy prepared for the purposes of Section 2.

10.2 The funding is being used in accordance with the approved Rural Action Plan and, therefore, complies with the requirements of the "well-being" provisions outlined above.

<b>Wards affected</b>	All rural wards	<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Background Papers</b>	Paper Y379 Update of the Rural Action Plan Paper Y606 Final Draft of the Rural Action Plan	<b>Subject Area</b>	Corporate Plans and Strategies

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Project	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	Notes
	Estimated/A ctual cost	Estimated/A ctual cost	Estimated/A ctual cost	
Assist with the development of National Cycle Route 51;	-	-	-	No funding required since cost of project is being met from existing department budget
Campaign for the creation of a cycle route from Sicklesmere to Bury St Edmunds;	-	-	-	No funding required since cost of project is being met from existing department budget
Campaign to support Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership's 'Community Speed Watch';	-	-	£2,000	Towards the cost of speed watch equipment and training for villages. Other monies will be levered in (e.g. from the Police)
Carry out a review of home working in the St Edmundsbury area; and	£7,500	-	-	Coming from Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (approved by Cabinet on 18 February 2008 - Paper Y563)
Produce a marketing campaign to encourage businesses to give staff more flexible working hours to reduce the impact of traffic at peak times.	-	£5,000	-	Towards promotional materials
Encourage existing supermarket-organised bus routes to be extended;	-	-	-	No funding necessary as requires staff time only
Investigate supporting existing community transport services to transport people from smaller villages to larger villages with shops;	-	£10,000	-	Contribution towards a Suffolk County Council initiative in the St Edmundsbury area
Organise transportation from identified villages to the Christmas Fayre; anc	£800	£850	£900	Towards coach hire and publicity. Includes 4% for inflation
Produce maps (in leaflet format) to show key services, walks, etc. in villages.	£2,500	£2,500	-	Working in partnership with Suffolk County Council
Distribute Black Poplar trees to suitable rural areas;	-	-	-	No funding required since cost of project is being met from existing department budget
Identify key sites where the potential for biodiversity improvements can be achieved	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	Suffolk Wildlife Trust to be commissioned to carry out this project in partnership with Parks Section

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Organise a training package for Parish Tree Wardens;	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	Suffolk Wildlife Trust to be commissioned to carry out this project in partnership with Parks Section
Produce dedicated web pages for the Countryside Forum;	-	-	-	No funding necessary as requires staff time only
Promote private gardens as havens for biodiversity; and	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	Suffolk Wildlife Trust to be commissioned to carry out this project in partnership with Parks Section
Work with partners to preserve Scots Pine trees of local provenance.	£200	£200	£200	Towards the purchase of plants, events and material costs
Commission Suffolk County Council's Rural Development Managers;	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000	Their work includes giving advice to rural communities on funding opportunities, helping to secure funding and supporting project management
Create a database showing village halls available for private hire;	£5,000	-	-	Suffolk ACRE is being commissioned for this project which includes an engagement event, construction of the database and creation of a dedicated website. Suffolk ACRE will also provide on-going maintenance of the database/website
Create a Farm Diversification Guidance booklet;	£2,000	-	-	Towards design and print costs
Create a new accommodation providers information pack;	-	-	-	No funding required since cost of project is being met from existing department budget
Create a section on the St Edmundsbury Borough Council website dedicated to rural areas;	-	-	-	No funding necessary as requires staff time only
Develop the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project in St Edmundsbury;	£1,770	£1,850	£1,950	Coffee Caravan to visit at least 6 times in each year. Includes 4% for inflation
Encourage and support villages to take part in annual Heritage Open Days;	£200	£200	£200	Towards publicity. Villages will be encouraged to apply for external funding for activities in their village. This project will also be part of the WSLSP Rural Issues sub group project and we hope to lever in funding from the WSLSP Partnership Fund

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Encourage online information technology training through promotional literature;	-	£1,000	-	Linked with project 28. To be delivered in partnership with Suffolk Association of Local Councils
Encourage Parish Councils to undertake housing needs surveys;	-	-	-	No funding required since cost of project is being met from existing department budget
Investigate and support community café idea in existing community buildings;	-	£1,750	£1,750	Towards promotional materials. This project will also be part of the WSLSP Rural Issues sub group project and we hope to lever in funding from the WSLSP Partnership Fund and other sources
Provision of remote work space in village halls;	-	£15,500	-	Linked with project 25. To be delivered by Suffolk Association of Local Councils
Organise a campaign to encourage and promote village welcome packs;	-	£500	-	This project will also be part of the WSLSP Rural Issues sub group project and we hope to lever in funding from the WSLSP Partnership Fund and other sources
Organise an event to support National Mills day;	£600	£600	£600	Towards transport around the mills and publicity
Organise rural business networking events;	£500	£520	£550	Based on a previous successful event. Towards hire of venue, catering and promotion. Match funding to be received from Business Link East. Includes 4% for inflation
Produce planning guidance on the re-use of redundant buildings;	£2,000	-	-	Towards printing costs
Promote existing events and initiatives for young people and investigate ways of facilitating access to these events;	-	-	-	No funding required since cost of project is being met from existing department budget
Provide tours of the larger villages with qualified guides;	£400	£400	£400	Towards a research fee for the guides and publicity
Support a Play Ranger post that will encourage play and provide a targeted programme of events for identified rural sites;	-	-	-	Funding for this post has been received from the Lottery so no funding is required
Support communities through the Post Office Network Change process; and	-	£5,000	£5,000	Towards the Suffolk Rural Economy Scheme and similar initiatives

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Work in partnership with other bodies to part fund and deliver youth initiatives.	-	-	-	No funding required since cost of project is being met from existing department budget
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£34,970</b>	<b>£57,370</b>	<b>£25,050</b>	<b>(TOTAL £117,390.00)</b>

<b>Breakdown:</b>	
0425 (LABGI)	£7,500.00
C120 (Minor improvements to villages)	£10,000.00
Earmarked reserve	£99,890.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£117,390.00</b>