

# Cabinet



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Recommendations from the Rural Area Working Party: 26 January 2015</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>CAB/SE/15/012</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	10 February 2015
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<b>Purpose of report:</b>	On 26 January 2015, the Rural Area Working Party (RAWP) considered the following substantive items of business:  (1) St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Project 2015; (2) Rural Public Transport; (3) Funding of Rural Local Authorities; (4) Parish Conference: Thursday 26 March 2015; and (5) Work Programme.  Recommendations for Cabinet consideration emanated from Items (1) and (3) above.	

<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u>:</b></p> <p><b>(a) <u>St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Project 2015</u></b></p> <p><b>That:</b></p> <p><b>(1) the Council's existing funding of £10,600 for rural youth programmes, as outlined in paragraph 1.1.3 of Report No: RUR/SE/15/001, continue to be ring-fenced for that purpose within any new wider approach to grants and commissioning, and underspends in that budget in any year be rolled forward as appropriate;</b></p> <p><b>(2) a review of the delivery and funding of the rural youth programme be carried out for implementation in 2016, with a view to enabling rural communities to provide sustainable and locally-led youth initiatives in their villages;</b></p> <p><b>(3) for 2015, the officers negotiate with the Suffolk YMCA to provide a transitional programme using the On the Spot Vehicle, taking into account the steer of the Rural Area Working Party at its meeting on 26 January 2015, and with the final detail to be approved in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.</b></p> <p><b>(b) <u>Funding of Rural Local Authorities</u></b></p> <p><b>That, supporting the work of the Rural Services Network and SPARSE, the Council raises its concerns regarding the relative under-funding of rural local authorities with its Members of Parliament.</b></p>
<b>Key Decisions:</b>	No, these are not Key Decisions - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Reports: RUR/SE/15/001 and 002</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>
<b>Implications:</b>	
<p><i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications?</i>  <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Reports: RUR/SE/15/001 and 002</li> </ul>
<p><i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications?</i>  <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

<i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Paper No: RUR/SE/15/002	
<i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report RUR/SE/15/001	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
Not applicable			
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All rural Wards	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		<a href="#">Report RUR/SE/15/001 – Rural Area Working Party: 26 January 2015</a> <a href="#">Paper RUR/SE/15/002 – Rural Area Working Party: 26 January 2015</a>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		None	

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations**

### **1.1 St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Project 2015 (Report No: RUR/SE/15/001)**

- 1.1.1 The Working Party considered Report No: RUR/SE/15/001 which, following the consultation with Members agreed at the last meeting of the Working Party, proposed a programme for rural youth work in 2015. The proposed programme would involve 54 sessions in six villages from May or July, provided by the YMCA using spare capacity of the Council's On the Spot Vehicle in Haverhill. Before taking into account any contributions from parishes, the proposed programme would cost £18,400, reflecting the roll-over of the underspent 2014/15 budget, and allowing for an element of 'pump-priming' work in the form of targeted volunteer recruitment and training and extra publicity. Additional sessions could also be arranged if funded by the parish councils or locality budgets.
- 1.1.2 The Working Party felt that, while it had served its original purpose, there was now a need to introduce a new approach to the provision and funding of the rural youth work programme, which complemented the Families and Communities Strategy, and the work of locality officers. The officers were therefore asked to carry out a review for implementation in 2016/17, with a view to ring-fencing the core budget (£10,600) and any carried forward underspends within a wider Community Chest/Locality Budget system of grants designed to encourage rural communities to innovate around sustainable and locally-led youth initiatives in their villages. It was recognised that some villages would continue to want to access a service like the On the Spot Vehicle, but others may have other ideas for engaging young people in positive youth activities.
- 1.1.3 In relation to 2015, the Working Party noted that, pending their meeting, no formal arrangements had yet been agreed with the YMCA, and therefore there was some flexibility for councillors to amend the approach proposed by the officers, provided it was done quickly. Therefore the Working Party requested that a transitional arrangement be put in place for 2015 whereby all parishes were given the opportunity to express an interest in receiving free 'taster sessions' from the On the Spot Vehicle, with a view to establishing if this was something they would want to continue with under the new approach from 2016. A condition of receiving the sessions would be that parishes would publicise them, and they would also be encouraged to take up the offer of community volunteer training. When the level of interest was known, the available sessions (provisionally up to 54 as originally planned) would be shared fairly between the parishes. Parishes or ward members would also still have the chance to purchase additional sessions.
- 1.1.4 The Working Party was asked to note that the agreement of the YMCA, as provider, would still be needed to the new approach, and some negotiation may be required over the cost and number of sessions which could be offered on this new transitional basis. Given the urgency of finalising a programme for this Spring, the Working Party therefore noted that the fine detail of the 2015 scheme would need to be agreed with the relevant Portfolio Holder, within the broad framework it had suggested. However, the Working Party asked that any communications be shared with local Ward Members before being sent to

parish councils so they could assist in promoting the scheme in their areas. Given the timetable, parishes would also be asked to respond with five weeks to the offer of the sessions.

## 1.2 **Funding of Rural Local Authorities (Paper No: RUR/SE/15/002)**

- 1.2.1 The Working Party noted the background information provided, including a 2014 DCLG and DEFRA research report, and the response to it of the Sparsity Partnership for Authorities Delivering Rural Services (SPARSE). This research showed that rural sparsity increased the cost of providing many council services including waste management, regulatory services and economic development. SPARSE also argued that the findings in the research did not properly reflect the fact that there was low or non-provision of other services in rural areas due to the cost and practicality of doing so. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that residents in urban areas currently received £178 more per head each year in government funding for council services than those in rural areas, a gap which would not be closed by government proposals for 2015/16. The Working Party noted that the Council had already highlighted this disparity in its response to the Government's consultation on the provisional finance settlement in January, but wished the Cabinet to carry out further lobbying and awareness raising.