

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 23 MARCH 2010
title: LANCASHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT
PERFORMANCE REWARD GRANT
PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

submitted by: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
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1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report invites Committee to endorse the recommendations of the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership Board relating to the delivery of this borough's Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA) Performance Reward Grant (PRG) allocation.
- 1.2 Because the Lancashire County Council protocol regarding the use of PRG (see Director of Resources report to meeting on 28th July 2009) requires expenditure to achieve objectives from the Sustainable Community Strategies for both Lancashire and each district the links must be made clear in putting forward projects.
- 1.3 The projects recommended for support relate to the whole range of RVBC ambitions and core values. Providing services for all is a key theme together with improving the environment of the area and the health of its residents.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 PRG is money payable by Central Government for the achievement of targets contained within the LAA.

Ribble Valley has received a proportion of the c£19million reward grant. £978,000 will be received by this Council in two tranches. The first 50%, £489,000, will be received at the end of this month. The second 50% in March 2011.

In effect the Council will receive the money on behalf of the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership (RVSP).

- 2.2 The principles relating to the use of the Grant were explained in the July report. That report included a local protocol which provided for 'bids' to be made to the RVSP who make recommendations for its use to the Policy and Finance Committee of this Council.
- 2.3 That process has been followed and after analysis by a small group of RVSP Board members the full Board meeting on March 1st resolved to present seven projects to this Committee together with a proposal whereby this Council's input to managing and monitoring the scheme could be resourced.

3 THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Ten projects went as far as completing a formal application. Only two were rejected at RVSP level and two others were merged. Thus seven projects are described below.
- 3.2 In addition the Board recommend that 7^{1/2}% of the available total of £489,000 is utilized by Ribble Valley Borough Council to meet the costs incurred in managing and monitoring the scheme in total and its administrative input into particular projects. This amounts to a figure of £37,000.

3.3 It is important to stress that a number of the following projects are far from fully formed, and discussions remain ongoing with the applicants/delivery bodies

Others relate to the creation of ringfenced funds that will be distributed to other applicants. This should not be a cause for concern as these funds can be carried forward into further years.

3.4 Tourist Information Kiosk

This project is the development of a TIC facility at the entrance to Clitheroe Castle. This council are both the applicants and the principal delivery body.

It is anticipated that match funding will be available from Lancashire and Blackpool tourism Board.

The total cost of the project is £160,000 and the recommended PRG contribution is £80,000.

3.5 Community Food Growing

This project is aimed at delivering sustainable allotments across Ribble Valley.

The initial bid from Pennine Groundwork was for a total of £110,000 and involved a significant revenue element.

Following discussions and consideration of the proposal it was decided that the applicant be invited to reduce the 'staffing' element of the costs and to focus any PRG contribution on land acquisition and preparation.

The recommended PRG contribution is £50,000.

3.6 Mobile Resource Centre

This proposal is to provide a vehicle which can tour the parts of the Borough distant from the key service and administrative centres.

The idea is that the vehicle will be a shared resource for RVSP partners and quite possibly others. The bid however is from RVBC and was originally for a total of £150,000 made up of £120,000 for the acquisition and conversion/equipping of the vehicle and £30,000 revenue costs.

There is unlikely to be any direct shared funding towards the capital cost of this project. There may be a contribution to operating the vehicle. Whilst it is acknowledged that there will be a need to develop systems that clarify from partners (including RVBC) how the revenue costs of the scheme will be funded the recommended PRG contribution is £120,000 relating to capital expenditure.

3.7 Hydro Energy

This project is a feasibility study covering Ribble Valley and other parts of the Forest of Bowland. It seeks to analyse sites with potential for power generation.

The total cost of the project was initially estimated at c£35,000 and a request for £25,000 was made from Ribble Valley's PRG. The scheme has however expanded somewhat and an initial identification of 120 sites will be reduced to about 50 for study by the consultants appointed.

The funding too has changed with an anticipated profile now of:

Lancaster	£15,000
Ribble Valley (PRG)	£15,000
AONB	£10,000
Pendle	£5,000

It is not clear whether Lancaster and Pendle will be using their own PRG money or indeed whether the anticipated AONB contribution will be found through Lancashire County Council's own PRG funding.

There are already several possible Ribble Valley sites likely to warrant detailed study.

The recommended PRG contribution is £15,000.

3.8 Gisburn Mountain Bike Trail

This project will be a further extension of the mountain bike Trails in Gisburn Forest.

Put forward by the Forestry Commission the scheme will provide training trails for family use. The proposal will help enhance the role of Stephen Park and will help Ribble Valley be seen as a clear element of the Pennine Lancashire 'Adrenaline Gateway' concept.

The estimated cost of the project, which in entirety capital expenditure is £70,000.

The recommended PRG contribution is £35,000

3.9 Domestic Violence Project

This project is submitted by the Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Domestic Violence Team (H.A.R.V.) and the Community Safety Partnership.

The project is to fund a full time Ribble Valley based worker to provide support to women who have experienced low to medium level domestic abuse in the Ribble Valley. It also incorporates a range of associated activities arising from cases of abuse.

The annual costs are estimated to be £43,000 and the bid is for £65,000 to allow a full time worker and two sessional young people's workers to be employed for two years. Match funding is anticipated from several organizations.

It is recommended that £50,000 be reserved for this project but that further detail be discussed in relation to a number of specific aspects including the nature of the Ribble Valley base, the anticipated outputs and the longer term sustainability of the project.

3.10 Ribble Valley Village Amenities

This project is an amalgamation of two proposals. The first of these was from RVBC and related to Village Hall improvements as part of the Healthy Valley project. This particular project has been underway for some time and has resulted in grants, funded by the PCT Health Inequalities Grant, to a number of villages.

This project requested £100,000 to secure a total expenditure of £200,000.

Groundwork Pennine Lancashire put forward a project titled 'Ribble Valley Play' which envisaged a range of revenue and capital costs to match existing RVBC funding to co-ordinate the management and development of play facilities within the borough.

The project was dominated by staffing and revenue expenditure and based around a re-launch of the 'play alliance' within the developing Childrens' Trust concept. £108,000 was the total bid.

These two projects were merged into a single project with the suggested title 'Village Amenities Improvement' which would allow the village and community groups looking after current play areas, or wishing to develop new sites to bid into a single 'pot' alongside village hall improvements.

The recommended PRG contribution to this is £100,000.

It is expected that this Council alongside its parish partners will deliver the project but more discussions will be needed.

4 ISSUES

4.1 A number of the projects outlined in Section 3 are still subject to amendment, detail and further discussions relating to matters such as long term sustainability, methods of delivery, project outputs and outcomes, and timescales.

4.2 There is a general requirement that PRG be used between capital and revenue expenditure on a 50:50 basis though this can be subject to inter-district negotiation and of course addressed where necessary by the use of the second tranche.

4.3 It is important to respect the intention that the various district level LSPs should have a rather greater say than just making recommendations. The key quote from the LCC protocol states:

‘Councils have responsibilities for the proper use of the funds and therefore for formally approving the allocation of the funds. However the recommendations on the use of the funds should be made by LSPs.

4.4 Therefore, this Report does not go into huge detail on the projects. Each has prepared a detailed application based on forms agreed by this Committee in July.

The detailed sifting and selection has been carried out by the RVSP itself.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Resources

The Council expect to receive £489,000 from Lancashire County Council. If this does not happen the projects will either not take place, or be funded elsewhere either in their submitted or a reduced form

The total PRG expenditure anticipated in Section 3 is as follows:

RVBC Administration	£37,000
Tourist Information Kiosk	£80,000
Community Food	£50,000
Mobile Resource Centre	£120,000
Hydro-energy	£15,000
Gisburn Mountain Bike Trail	£35,000
Domestic Violence	£50,000
Village Amenities	<u>£100,000</u>
TOTAL	<u>£487,000</u>

The capital/revenue split will demand further discussion in some cases but for the first tranche it is expected that there will be a clear capital bias.

There will be additional call on RVBC officers time in some instances beyond the £37,000 for scheme administration.

5.2 Technical, Legal and Environmental

None known to the author or submitter.

5.3 Political/Reputational

The Council's reputation will be enhanced as a partner organization should the RVSP recommendations be endorsed, and the projects delivered.

5.4 Equality/Diversity

Many of the projects are designed to respect and enhance diversity and promote equality. None would appear to have a negative impact.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The projects recommended for assistance offer great opportunities to contribute to many key local objectives of both this Council and its partners.

7 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Committee are recommended to:

7.1 endorse the recommendations of the RVSP regarding the use of Performance Reward Grant.

7.2 authorise the Director of Development to maintain an ongoing dialogue with the project delivery organisations with a view to clarifying details and outputs as referred to in Section 3 above.

7.3 instruct the Director of Development to report progress on grant awarded schemes to this Committee on a half yearly basis.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

For further information please ask for Stewart Bailey, extension 4491.