

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: TUESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2011
title: ENDORSEMENT OF PROJECTS RECOMMENDED BY RIBBLE
VALLEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (RVSP) TO BE FUNDED BY
PERFORMANCE REWARD GRANT (PRG) FUNDS 2011/12
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: DAVID INGHAM – PARTNERSHIP OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 This report seeks members endorsement of the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership Board's (RVSP) recommendations on the allocation of funds derived from the this borough's Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA) Performance Reward Grant (PRG) 2011/12 allocation and the discounted second home council tax for 2011/12.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The corporate ambitions of the council are closely linked with those of the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership (RVSP) and the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). The projects funded from the PRG all contribute to the achievement of the objectives contained within the SCS and its associated action plans.
- Community Objectives – The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and its associated action plans form the basis of the sense of place and common vision of the communities in the Ribble Valley. The projects are predominantly from the community.
- Corporate Priorities – In its role as community leader the Council has been instrumental in developing and shaping the SCS. The projects, which are to be funded by the PRG, are all consistent with the SCS.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

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

2.2 The Government savings package for 2010/11 included savings of LAA Reward Grant of £125m nationally. The reasons behind this were that the focus on reducing the deficit, whilst protecting front line services, meant that the Government looked carefully at programmes such as LAA Reward and concluded that the programme should be reduced. The announcement stated that "Areas will receive 50% of the reward achieved on any target".

2.3 Areas with LAAs that ran from 2006-2009 (including the Lancashire Partnership), had already submitted their claims, 50% of which was paid in the last financial year. The whole claim for the Lancashire Partnership was £19.1m, of which 50%, £9.5m was received in 2009/10. It was agreed by the Lancashire Partnership that 40% of the LAA Reward Grant would be allocated to the Lancashire Partnership, with the remaining 60% divided equally between the 12 District LSPs. Ribble Valley received this first tranche which amounted to £489,000.

- 2.4 Some final claims were submitted in December 2010 and it has been confirmed that the final amount payable to Ribble Valley in 2011/12 will be £169,000. This money has now been released.
- 2.5 The RVSP Board has previously determined that these PRG funds and the funds derived from the discounted council tax on second homes (2010/11) would be combined for the purpose of providing a single source of funding for projects.
- 2.6 Invitations were made throughout the Council and Strategic Partnership for projects to be developed that required funding and expressions of interest were prepared in the forms of bids in an agreed and well-established process developed in previous years of funding applications. An appraisal panel comprising the Council Leader, the Chair of the RVSP Board and a third RVSP Board member, was established to review the applications. A panel meeting was held on 9th August 2011 to consider the bids in detail and made a series of recommendations which were discussed by the RVSP Board on 12th September 2011, who in turn endorsed the recommendations of the panel.
- 2.7 The principles relating to the use of the Grant follow an established protocol, which provides for bids to be made to the RVSP who make recommendations for its use to the Policy and Finance Committee.
- 2.8 Five projects were recommended by the RVSP Board on the 12th September 2011. These are set out in Appendix 1. Several other projects were deferred in order that more detailed planning and funding options could be explored.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications
- Resources – The eventual allocation and monitoring of the PRG/RVSP budget will require a degree of staff time. None of the proposed expenditure requires the use of currently unallocated RVBC budgets.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Policy and Finance Committee has the role of ratifying the recommendations of the RVSP Board on the spending of the funds.
 - Political – Ratification of the funding allocation offers the Council the opportunity to have a major influence on projects which address issues of community concern and service delivery including those beyond its direct control.
 - Reputation – The Council is a key member of the Strategic Partnership and its association with the projects will enhance the Council's reputation.

4 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 4.1 Approve the recommendations of the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership Board for 2011/2, of funds derived from the discounted council tax on second homes and Performance Reward Grant as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for David Ingham, extension 4549.

APPENDIX 1

SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

Project	Funds Recommended
Co-ordinated Clitheroe Castle Grounds Activities	£10,000
Village Amenities Improvements	£100,000
Ribble Valley Walking Week 2012	£2,000
Eco-classroom and Renewables Centre	£2,000
Hield Well "Tarry-a-while" site, Clitheroe	£10,000

Total	£124,000

DETAILS

Co-ordinated Activities and Mentoring in the Castle Grounds, Clitheroe

The Castle Grounds in Clitheroe are an area where young people naturally congregate. This also means that the Grounds attract problems with under age drinking and substance misuse.

The skate park and drop in at the Bowling Green Café provide a start point for improved co-ordination of activities and mentoring in the Grounds **(Funds recommended £10,000 – Match funding from LDAAT amounting to £40,000 has been confirmed) - It was noted that there were further opportunities for match funding from Sport England and other sources for further capital investment, which were still being developed)**

Village Amenities Improvements

The Healthy Valley Project works to tackle inequalities in access to health and social care services and leisure activities in rural parts of the Ribble Valley and support parish councils, community ventures and social enterprises working within the villages.

This project is a repeat of last year's, offering the opportunity for village hall committees, parish and town councils and organisations within the village communities to bid for up to £20,000 for each individual project to provide community activities, improve play areas or refurbish and develop their hall or other village amenities. This funding will have to be matched by other grants or fund raising activities and builds on the success and demand generated by the achievements of the previous year's applicants. **(Funds recommended for bidding into £100,000, match funding £100,000) - It was agreed that the other "parish related" schemes that had been put forward in the bidding process would be encouraged to bid into the single Village Amenities Improvement Grant fund of £100,000. There will be clear terms on which such funds could be used, similar to the Council's parish amenity grants schemes that had operated previously and there may be an opportunity to expand this in a second tranche if there is a surplus of suitable schemes.**

Ribble Valley Walking Week 2012

The aims of the inaugural Ribble Valley Walking Week in 2012 (probably May or June) are to:

- encourage responsible access and walking in the countryside
- raise awareness and understanding of countryside issues
- encourage local people to discover their local countryside
- encourage visitors to the Ribble Valley
- give local people and visitors the opportunity to learn about the culture, history and natural history of the countryside around them

- promote the health benefits of walking and being out in the countryside
- benefit local economies

The walks would be graded into easy, moderate and strenuous and be led by individuals from partner organizations, co-coordinated by the Ribble Valley Walks Co-coordinator. Ribble Valley Walking Week will be dependent on working in partnership with individuals, communities, groups and organisations. Walkers benefit from the knowledge of local leaders and leaders are able to promote their organisation's interests and work.

The design, printing and distribution of the programme of walks both as a brochure and web site will need to be built into the project. Bookings would be accepted from May 2012 and limited to 20 per walk.

Booking is essential for the programme but no charge will be made. People will be asked to book via email or by telephone.

In the first year 15 walks would need to be organised and assessed and a target of 300 walkers brought onto the walks. **(Funds recommended £2,000, match funding £4,000 in kind)**

Ribble Valley Eco-Classroom and Renewables Centre

The Eco-Classroom and Renewables Centre was originally conceived as an educational resource for the Ribble Valley primary and high schools. The concept is for studying sustainable living and extends the work already undertaken in the schools by providing a resource and study centre. Pendle View Fisheries on the A59 has offered space for this project and students from the High Schools along with other partners have produced schemes for a food growing area on ground that is reclaimed from the workings that were left following the construction of the A59 "by pass" **(Funds recommended £2,000, match funding £10,000, £55,000 in renewables demonstration equipment and in kind)**

Hield Well "Tarry-a-while" Site, Clitheroe

As part of the Clitheroe Town Team work plan the provision of areas within the town, which can create "resting and meeting" places, was regarded as one of the priorities to be developed from the Clitheroe Masterplan. The project encompasses the re-interpretation of the area around Hield Well, one of the original three wells supplying Clitheroe with its water supply in the late seventeenth century, along with the placement of benches, trees and signage around the junction of Lowergate, Duck Street and Wellgate (the project may attract match funding from Lancashire County Council and Heritage Lottery), which would then be the design pilot for other parts of the town centre such as Market Place and Castle Gates. **(Funds recommended £10,000, match funding £140,000)- The RVSP Board felt that this project had potential for development but would only be payable when the full scheme and costings had been prepared and accepted by the appraisal panel.**

Saint Michael & St John's Field Play Ground and Footpath, Clitheroe

The Clitheroe Masterplan illustrates the need to open up routes into Lowergate, Clitheroe and the provision of "green" areas within the town. The Lidl outlet opening at Shawbridge Mill will naturally lead to more visitors and potential customers arriving at this end of the town. The field beneath Candle Makers Court and Fold and St Michael & St John's primary school, bordered by Mearley Brook has been offered as an open area for the town. It is possible to open up the field at Shaw Bridge and run a footpath through to the passage between the primary school and St Michael and St John's Church entering on to Lowergate.

Improved drainage of the playing fields and the siting of a play area at the Shawbridge entrance and bench seating alongside the path represent the main elements of the project (attracting match funding from an existing 106 agreement, Diocesan and Sport England sources). - **It was felt that this scheme had potential but that more work was needed to identify the scope of the project and the anticipated costings and potential match funding. This will be done and brought back to the appraisal panel.**

Little Green Bus

Ribble Valley Community Transport was a Social Enterprise with charitable objectives and is now a charity, which operates on a not-for-profit basis running the Little Green Bus.

The organisation provides transport for mainly elderly, vulnerable members of the community, for whom accessing public transport is either difficult or in some cases impossible.

Lancashire County Council withdrew the subsidy on concessionary travel on community transport, from July 1st 2011, meaning that the enterprise has lost approximately £50,000 of its forecast revenue in this financial year (2011/12). The organisation has increased the fares substantially and started a paid membership scheme (£20 per person plus a journey charge). This may have a significant impact on both journeys (Currently 5,400 per year) and members of the scheme (Currently 870), whilst alternative sources are identified for the longer term, the first part of this PRG application is for short term support for the organisation as after the first few months operation under the new LCC arrangements, a deficit is currently forecast. The second part of the bid was for £25,000 towards a bus to replace part of its aged fleet. **It was agreed that a decision on the short-term financial support should be held over, pending further performance information. The application for £25,000 towards a replacement bus was not supported at this stage.**