

## RURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### SUPPORT FOR LEADER BID

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request Members support for the allocation of resources to the LEADER Bid for 'East' Leicestershire.

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that;

- 2.1 **Members note the submission of the LEADER Bid.**
- 2.2 **Members approve the allocation of one day per week of the Economic Development Officer's capacity to be allocated to support the LEADER Programme for its period of operation.**

#### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 As Members have previously been advised the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) has been working through the process for the LEADER Bid on behalf of certain areas of rural Leicestershire. The bid requests access to European rural funding which briefly, promotes economic and social activity in certain rural areas.
- 3.2 Melton Borough Council is a partner within the LRP and has supported the development of the LEADER Bid. The Bid has passed initial phases of consideration and is moving towards submission of the final Bid for consideration by DEFRA the sponsoring government department. To date, as a temporary measure, Melton Borough Council and Harborough District Council have allocated one day per week of an officer of each authority to assist with local evidence gathering, consultation and bid preparation.
- 3.3 The Bid is now in its final stages of preparation in readiness for submission on the 5<sup>th</sup> September. The bid area covers the whole of Melton Borough, the majority of Harborough District Council area and part of Charnwood together with a small area of Blaby District Council. The reason for the area covered is to maximise the population affected in accordance with the Bid criteria.
- 3.4 The Bid has been developed on a clear evidence base, together with extensive consultation. This consultation was particularly well attended in the Melton area. A shadow Local Action Group (LAG) has been established to assist with the development of the proposals. An external consultant with extensive experience both with working in Leicestershire, particularly with the rural agenda and on LEADER bids elsewhere, has worked to pull together the submission. A private and confidential copy of the current draft of the Bid submission is deposited in the Members Room should Members wish to peruse the document.
- 3.5 At the last LAG meeting, Members of the Group were advised that one of the criteria that DEFRA will examine in determining the success of otherwise of the Bids is the charge for administrative resources by the coordinating group. It was suggested that in order to manage the actual administrative cost of the Bid, Melton and Harborough could confirm the continued allocation of the current resource of one day per week from each council to assist with professional management of the Bid programmes.

3.6 The priorities to be covered by the Bid through individual programmes to deliver the priorities are as follows;

Priority 1- well-connected and innovative land based businesses supported to improve their productivity and exploit diversification opportunities.

Priority 2- A thriving food and drink sector producing and promoting high quality local foods

Priority 3- Networked home-based businesses and micro enterprises with confidence to grow.

Priority 4- A thriving short stay visitor destination, the number one short break destination for people interested in fine food and drink.

Priority 5- Active and inclusive communities that are able to help provide local services.

Priority 6- Vibrant rural towns underpinning a thriving economic hinterland.

From the above Members will see that much of the work of the councils Economic Development Officer would cover these priority areas. In fact many overlap with the Council's approach to economic development, supporting a vibrant town centre and our USP of the Rural Capital of Food.

3.7 Officers therefore suggest that the continued allocation of one day per week of the Economic Development Officers capacity to support and develop the Bid programmes, the opportunities available and to make links through to the Melton business and rural communities, would be compatible with current duties and give an additional opportunity to the economic development offer and should be supported.

#### **4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Officer consider that this work can be assimilated without any detriment to current workloads and activity as a result of the clear linkages, overlaps and opportunities. Although the Bid Period could be as much as six years it is considered the workloads will still be compatible during that period.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The allocation of one day per week of the Officers time will amount to £6,500 per annum and will be accommodated within current budget.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 There are no particular legal implications as this is a bidding process and the Leicestershire County Council has agreed to carry the status of Accountable Body should the Bid be successful. The Council will hold the status of partner and have a seat at senior officer level on the LAG.

#### **7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 There are no particular implications rising from this report.

## 8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no particular implications arising from this report. The County Council will undertake the EIA as required.

## 9.0 RISKS

### 9.1 Probability

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Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		1. 2.		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

→  
Impact

Risk No.	Description
1.	Bid unsuccessful.
2.	Capacity issues arise in future years.

## 10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 Certain of the activities particularly those relating to farm diversification and home working will assist to a certain degree in combating the impact of climate change.

## 11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Extensive consultation has taken place with the business community and other interested organisations. The LAC Group has also acted as a consultation body.

## 12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All.

Contact Officer: Lynn Aisbett  
Date: 02/09/2014

Appendices: None

Background Papers: Relevant extract LA Group meeting note

Reference: