

 <b>Executive – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008</b>		<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Central Warwickshire Villages L.E.A.D.E.R. Project</b>	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Tim Healey – Community Partnership Team – <a href="mailto:timhealey@warwickshire.gov.uk">timhealey@warwickshire.gov.uk</a> Tel 01926 456019	
<b>Service Area</b>	Community Partnership Team	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	Lapworth, Leek Wootton, Budbrooke, Bishop's Tachbrook, Radford Semele, Cubbington, Stoneleigh	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	N/a	
<b>Background Papers</b>	None	

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Key Decision?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
With regard to officer approval all reports <u>must</u> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Relevant Director		Chris Elliott
Chief Executive		Chris Elliott
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		Mary Hawkins
Legal		Simon Best
Finance	22/09/11	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)		Cllr Chris White
<b>Consultation Undertaken</b>		
Please insert details of any consultation undertaken with regard to this report.		
<p>To date discussion regarding LEADER has been at Warwick Partnership Executive Group as necessary. A key part of the current phase in obtaining LEADER funds is consultation and a wide range of consultation activities are currently being undertaken via Community Forums in rural Localities, direct with Parish and Joint Parish Councils and the public via the website <a href="http://www.warwickshireleader.net/">http://www.warwickshireleader.net/</a></p>		
<b>Final Decision?</b>	No	
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>		

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Outlines the progress made in securing £1.5M from the European Union funding stream L.E.A.D.E.R. for a project aimed at increasing cohesion in Villages in Warwick District and Rugby Borough

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Members note the progress in obtaining funds for Central Warwickshire Villages LEADER Project and formally offer their support to the bid.
- 2.2 That Members agree for Cllr Michael Doody be your nominated representative on the Local Action Group which steers the project
- 2.3 That the Executive receives periodic update reports on the progress of the Project as necessary

## **3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 LEADER began in 1991 and is an EU programme to support grassroots-led rural development. Multi-sector partnerships bid for this for a particular area and create a Local Action Group (LAG) to manage and deliver a Local Development Strategy (LDS) which they devise. LAGs usually support a number of small projects which collectively address the themes identified in their LDS.
- 3.2 Warwickshire County Council (WCC) coordinated a partnership bid for a North Warwickshire LEADER+ project in 2001 – the last round though ultimately it was unsuccessful. A new £10.2m LEADER programme was launched as part of the 2007-13 Rural Development Programme England, managed in the West Midlands by Advantage West Midlands (AWM) They looked to County Councils as Local Strategic Partnership leads in rural parts of the region to promote the programme. The County's Regeneration Strategy & Europe team, with support from the County Council's Area Teams within Performance & Development Directorate and District and Borough Councils, accordingly promoted the opportunity amongst potential community and public sector partners. WCC organised and hosted two well-attended events at Garden Organic in September last year and earlier this year which created a great deal of interest across the county.
- 3.3 Four bids went in to AWM from Warwickshire-based partnerships in January this year at the Expression of Interest (EoI) stage. Those from Stratford DC and WRCC (Warwickshire Rural Community Council) were unsuccessful but two were invited to progress to full bid stage. These were one from North Warwickshire Rural Community Partnership fronted by North Warwickshire Borough Council covering all of the Borough, and one covering the rural parished wards of Rugby Borough and Warwick District submitted by the Central Warwickshire Villages LEADER partnership - fronted by Garden Organic (GO).
- 3.4 This represents a good result for Warwickshire as we are the only County with two wholly West Midlands-based LAGs invited to go to full bid. AWM is working on the presumption that all LAGs invited to submit full bids will be successful. Unlike 2001 there is no national appraisal and LAGs would have to do something badly wrong to be rejected at full bid stage. There is no fixed deadline- bids are to be submitted when ready. Both Warwickshire LAGs are aiming for December 08.

- 3.5 The Central Warwickshire Villages LEADER bid aims to build community cohesion and a sense of identity in the villages of the parished rural wards of Rugby Borough Council and Warwick District Council.
- 3.6 The methodology suggested in the submitted Expression of Interest and which the appraisers welcomed as innovative includes:
- Events and activities that encourage communities to come together to create artworks and performance
  - Support for communities to develop their own local food production through community gardens
  - Establishing links between local communities and farmers
- 3.7 The project administrative and financial lead will be Garden Organic (GO). The partnership has asked WCC to be Accountable Body as it covers parts of two Districts / Boroughs and AWM are keen to see public bodies such as local authorities undertaking this role in support of Voluntary and Community Sector bodies such as Garden Organic. The bid is for £1.5m over 3 or 4 years. Officers from the Joint Warwick District/Warwickshire County Council Community Partnership Team and County Council Officers are involved in the shadow LAG working group preparing the full bid.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The alternative to supporting this proposal is not to. This would substantially increase the likelihood of the proposal being rejected by AWM and villages in rural parts of the District and possibly Rugby Borough would be unable to access their share of the £1.5M allocation.
- 4.2 You may consider it more appropriate to nominate another representative for the Local Action Group. However Cllr Doody's position as joint Chair of the Warwick Partnership Executive Group is equivalent to the Rugby Borough nominee Cllr Mrs Leigh Hunt who is the Chair of the Rugby Forward Partnership.

#### **5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The Central Warwickshire Programme is 100% funded by LEADER with the exception of one training measure where the applicant would have to provide 30% matched funding. Members may be aware that EU monies usually come with a requirement for local bodies to provide match funding. LEADER projects are pre-matched nationally by DEFRA although organisations are encouraged by AWM to use it to leverage in additional match funding. There is therefore no cash contribution required from WCC or WDC although the value of our officer time can be used as cash match.

#### **6. POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 The LEADER programme relates directly to Warwick District Council's Corporate Strategy 2008-2011 – specifically
- Leadership – to increase the percentage of residents who are satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live

- Culture – Maintain the number of public cultural events, currently 17 annually, specifically promoting inclusion and community cohesion organised by or in partnership with WDC.

- 6.2 The proposed LDS relates directly to the Warwickshire Together Local Area Agreement (LAA). Stronger Communities is identified as one of the blocks for the County Local Area Agreement and is actioned through the SCS of both Rugby Borough and Warwick District. The LAA Stronger Community Block places strong emphasis on creating strong, stable and cohesive communities through the empowerment of people to have a greater say on how they are governed and services are provided. To create the environment where people of all backgrounds can access the services they require within an overall atmosphere of tolerance and diversity.
- 6.3 The locality-based governance model being promoted by Rugby Borough Council, Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council is key to this, opening up opportunities for local communities to come together to have a greater say and play a greater part in the governance and delivery of services to rural communities. This project seeks to facilitate this process by developing the sense of community in rural villages to ensure that they make best use of this development.
- 6.4 Community empowerment and cohesion are two of the four key outcomes of the LAA and this programme, with its focus on bringing together new village residents, more established village residents and migrant worker populations will contribute to these.

## **7. What happens next for Central Warwickshire?**

- 7.1 Over the last 3 months lead members of what will become the LAG have met to discuss progress within the confines of the outline application and a working group is preparing the full bid. Membership is from the Public and Voluntary/Community Sector under the independent chairmanship of John Ridgley, retired former Head of County Council Regeneration Projects team. Broader public 'consultation' is via a project website <http://www.warwickshireleader.net/> and a programme of face to face meetings and broader community consultation is also underway throughout autumn. Project outputs remain to be agreed as part of the full bid but they will be realistically crafted to be achievable within a 3-4 year lifespan spread over many villages in central Warwickshire.
- 7.2 AWM has given each Programme the go-ahead to spend up to £25,000 on developing their project /full bid. AWM have said there will be minimal delay in approving the Full Application so both LAGs hope to start the projects early in 2009.
- 7.3 The day to day structure for the Programme will be determined when the consultation exercise has taken place. A Decision Making Body or Board will be set up that will consider reports and recommendations from the LAG and the Project Manager. These will include quarterly update reports and agreeing grant requests. This body has to have a minimum of 50% private or third sector membership though WCC will have representation either at Senior Officer or Member level, as will Rugby Borough Council and Warwick District Council. There will be specialist WCC officer representation to advise the Board and LAG on issues of eligibility etc.
- 7.5 WCC is Accountable Body for a number of externally funded schemes so have some expertise in-house. This scheme is slightly different, however, in that the

project lead is an external partner – and from the Charitable sector, so Legal Services are working with us to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to alleviate any 'risks' that may involve.