

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2004**

**LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL PARTNERSHIP – RURAL STRATEGY  
ACTION PLANS FOR 2004/05 AND 2005/08**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To seek the Scrutiny Commission's comments on the Leicestershire Rural Partnership's Rural Strategy Action Plan for 2004/05.

**Background**

2. Since 1993 the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP), with considerable support from the County Council, has co-ordinated the activities of a number of agencies delivering services in rural Leicestershire. This co-ordination has taken place within the context provided by a Leicestershire Rural Strategy jointly prepared and agreed by the members of the LRP.
3. The County Council has consistently taken the role of lead body for the LRP providing the Chair (currently Mrs Pendleton CC) and financial and staffing resources to support LRP activity. This support is matched by funding from partners and other sources, including the Countryside Agency, emda and other local authorities.
4. Over the past 12 months the Rural Strategy has been reviewed and this culminated in approval of a revised Leicestershire Rural Strategy by the LRP's Management Board on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004 and the County Council on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2004. An Action Plan for 2004/5 (attached as Appendix A) has been developed to guide implementation of the Rural Strategy in the current financial year. This Action Plan has been shaped by funding decisions already made by the County Council and other partners (in particular the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership). Over the next 6 months an Action Plan for 2005-8 will be developed and this will demonstrate how the strategy will be implemented over the next three years, although confirmation of the Action Plan on an annual basis will be necessary to recognise the funding decision and allocations of LRP partners.

## **Rural Strategy Action Plans 2004/05**

5. The revised Rural Strategy provides the strategic framework for the work of the LRP and will be accompanied by an Action Plan. The Action Plan 2004/5 (Appendix A) sets out what actions the LRP is implementing in the current financial year. Much of the content of the Action Plan for 2004/5 has already been decided as budgets have been allocated by the County Council and some of the other key funding partners and a programme of projects was agreed at the February LRP Management Board Meeting.
6. The Action Plan follows the structure of the revised Rural Strategy, with projects set out under the strategic objectives included within the Strategy. The development of actions under the Young Peoples and Environment sections of the strategy will take place in the context of the 2005 – 2008 Action Plan, working closely with Leicestershire Together and ENABLE (Environmental Action for a Better Leicestershire).
7. The Action Plan attached to this report details the nature and focus of each project, lead Programme Teams, key targets and milestones, and the funding package for each project.
8. The reporting and reviewing process for each Programme Team's projects will be undertaken on a six monthly basis and this information will be fed into the process of allocating funding for future years.

## **LRP Action Plan 2005/08**

9. The Action Plan preparation process for 2005/06 and beyond began at the 2004 Rural Conference. The next stage will be for LRP Programme Teams to develop and work up project proposals relating to their areas of responsibility.
10. A proposed structure of the Action Plan, setting out its broader context will be considered by the LRP Management Board in December for initial comment and consideration. LRP Development Days in December and January/February will consider in more detail a draft 2005 – 2008 Action Plan.
11. It is intended that a final draft Action Plan will be considered by the LRP's Management Board, Scrutiny Commission and the Cabinet in March/April 2005.
12. Summary of Proposed Timetable:

Time Period	Objective
September – November 2004	Programme Teams/LRP Co-ordination Group to develop and consider projects for 2005/06 and beyond.
December 2004	LRP Management Board/Development

January – February 2005	Day to consider the structure and broad context of the Action Plan.
March/April 2005	Further consideration by Programme Teams and at LRP Development Day.
	Proposed approval of Action Plan by LRP Management Board, Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet.

### **Resources Implications**

13. There are no direct resource implications. County Council funding for projects in the attached 2004/5 Action Plan has already been agreed. The content of the 2005/8 Action Plan will be influenced by anticipated funding available from the County Council, other LRP partners and other funding sources.
14. The County Council provides significant funding to support the work of the LRP and the allocation of this funding to projects and initiatives will be made within the policy framework provided by the Medium Term Corporate Strategy, the Leicestershire Community Strategy and the revised Rural Strategy

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

15. The LRP aims to address equal opportunity issues through the implementation of the revised Rural Strategy. Through its Programme Team structure, the LRP is committed to tackling the cross cutting issues of Sustainability, Equality, Diversity, Community Development and Social Inclusion. To ensure these issues are picked up within project development, a sustainability checklist has been incorporated into the LRP project application form with the aim of maximising the potential for the integration of cross cutting issues and project planning.

### **Recommendation**

16. That the draft Action Plan 2004/5 be approved and the preparation process for developing the 2005/8 Action Plan be agreed.

### **Background Papers**

17. Appended Action Plan 2004/5  
Leicestershire Rural Strategy 2004 – 2009

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