

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

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| 1. | Meeting:- | Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth and Prosperity |
| 2. | Date:- | 23rd January 2012 |
| 3. | Title:- | Communities Living Sustainably – Big Lottery Funding |
| 4. | Directorate:- | Resources |

5. Summary

This report seeks approval for RMBC involvement in a partnership funding bid to the Communities Living Sustainably programme run by the Big Lottery. The Big Lottery will invest £10 million in up to 10 communities across England to empower people to address environmental challenges. This initiative offers a unique opportunity to access grant funding - at a time of public funding austerity - to support some of the most socially deprived communities in the Rotherham East and Boston and Castle wards.

6. Recommendations

- That members agree that RMBC continue to support and be an active partner in the Communities Living Sustainably proposal, focusing on Boston & Castle/Rotherham East Corridor.

7. Proposals and Details

The Big Lottery programme has attracted considerable interest in the region, with Sheffield, Hull and the Dearne Valley Eco Vision presenting bids in South Yorkshire. The least resilient communities in the Dearne Valley are predominantly located in Barnsley and Doncaster and the communities in Rotherham are comparatively less in need than their neighbours in the Dearne. To serve the best interests of Rotherham's most vulnerable residents and compete most effectively for Big Lottery funding, we seek approval to submit an expression of interest to support approximately 23,300 residents in some of the most deprived communities in the borough, targeting the Boston & Castle and Rotherham East wards (see analysis at Appendix B).

The Big Lottery is asking for expressions of interest to be returned by 31ST January 2012. The initial project appraisal document (see draft attached – Appendix A) is a simple form that keeps the amount of work to be invested and associated costs to a minimum. It is therefore good use of scarce resource and offers good partnership opportunities for the private, public and voluntary sector in Rotherham.

The Rotherham bid is being led by Voluntary Action Rotherham and will draw competitive strength from the use of the assets and community infrastructure in the town centre and in areas that have received little funding support to address long term environmental change.

The communities targeted for grant funding are presented in Appendix B along with key social and economic indicators and a list of the community organisations that have the potential to actively contribute to the project. The details of the partnership arrangements are still to be defined in terms of who does what, but good progress has been made with potential partners in the private and voluntary sector.

Next Steps

Expression of interest - 31st of January 2012

Final project submission if invited to the next stage – 4th June 2012

8. Finance

The Communities Living Sustainably Initiative will award grants of between £500,000 and £1 million for up to five years. This funding will provide an opportunity for communities to work together to access further resources and support so that their resilience to climate change and their sustainability are bolstered long after the Big Lottery funding ends.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Direct competition with other local bids

The Big Lottery funding is likely to be distributed across all of England with at best one funding allocation in South Yorkshire. Competition for funding in South Yorkshire will be

high because community needs are very real and spread across all northern urban areas. The expression of interest process introduced by the Big Lottery is not onerous in terms of resource and it makes strategic sense to register the needs and interest of the communities with the Big Lottery. An overwhelming local demand for funding may lead to further national/regional initiatives or to an extension of the proposed programme.

The risk is rated medium to low.

Big Lottery to lose confidence in Rotherham

Initial conversations with Big Lottery have indicated that a bid from Rotherham would be well received and would not be assessed as undermining Rotherham's image with the funder. The Dearne Valley Eco Vision proposal is a sub-regional bid that would have the potential to complement the Rotherham bid in terms of synergies and expertise in a context where more monies were made available.

The risk is rated medium to low.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

If successful, this funding will help to support the "improving the environment" priority in the council's corporate plan, and in particular the following actions:

- Ensure that people, schools and communities have the right information to help understand climate change and ensure that future climate change is included in the planning of new buildings and services, in particular new homes
- Support projects which encourage more physical activity and different types of transport such as walking groups, schools projects, cycle to work, pedometer and recycled bicycle hire
- Develop plans and projects and implement measures to reduce the risk of flooding to homes, businesses and the Town centre

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation has been carried out with officers across RMBC and a range of external partners. Details of the draft expression of interest are in Appendix B.

There are more details of the programme on the Big Lottery website at the following link:
http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_communities_living_sustainably.htm

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