

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEDWAY VALLEY COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

02 December 2008

Report of the Chief Leisure Officer

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non Key Decision

1 2009/10 PROPOSED PROJECT WORK

Summary

This report brings forward proposals for the allocation of approved revenue funding for the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership in 2009/10.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Members will be aware that this Council has previously committed an annual contribution of £6,000 towards the core funding of the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership, and additional funding for other project work. This is supported by other partners including Maidstone Borough Council (£6,000), the Environment Agency (£21,000) and Kent County Council (£8,950).

1.1.2 For 2009/10 £10,600 is being brought forward within the Council's proposed revenue budgets to support the Partnership. This once again includes the allocation of £6,000 for core funding and £4,600 for other project work.

1.2 Proposed Project Work

1.2.1 Events Programme – Following a successful and well attended programme of public events held at the Borough Council's two country parks in 2008/09, the following events are proposed for the next financial year:

- Two Bat Walks at each Country Park
- One Bird Walk at Haysden Country Park
- One Wildlife Activity Day at both Country Parks

1.2.2 Giant Hogweed Control Programme – The programme, now in its 8th year, is managed by the Partnership and offers a coordinated approach to the control of this invasive weed species. The Council has previously provided a contribution of £625 to support this programme and it is proposed that the same level of financial support be provided in 2009/10. Total project funding is in the region of £14,000,

with additional financial support from the Environment Agency, Maidstone Borough Council, Wealden District Council and Tandridge District Council.

1.2.3 Free Tree Scheme 2008 – Working in seven local authority areas the scheme provides an opportunity for members of the public to enhance their local environment, landscape and biodiversity by planting appropriate native tree species. Funded by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit, Network Rail, Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council the scheme offers up to 25 free trees to individuals and groups. This Council has previously contributed £500 towards the project and it is proposed that the same level of financial support be provided in 2009/10.

1.2.4 A summary of the above projects is provided below:

| Project | Cost (£) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Events Programme | 2,290 |
| Giant Hogweed Control Programme | 625.00 |
| Free Tree Scheme | 500.00 |
| TOTAL | 3,415.00 |

1.2.5 Members will note £1,185.00 of unallocated funding, and it is proposed that this be used to support the continuation of the School Grounds Programme highlighted below at sub-section 1.3.

1.3 School Grounds Programme

1.3.1 Members will be aware that the Partnership has implemented a highly successful programme of conservation improvements and advice to schools across the borough. This work was delivered utilising additional one-off funding previously approved by Members, and allowed ten schools to develop conservation and biodiversity projects with the assistance of the Partnership. Five of these schools also benefit from direct assistance with the implementation of projects.

1.3.2 At the last meeting of this Panel, Members expressed their desire for the continuation of this work, and it is proposed that this can be achieved utilising the funding highlighted above at sub-section 1.2.5 by working in partnership with the Valley of Visions project.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 The Council has an approved Memorandum of Agreement with the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 Proposed projects will be fully funded through existing revenue budgets with the assistance of external funding.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 All activities carried out above will be subject to the provision of appropriate individual risk assessment.

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the proposed 2009/10 project work for the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership as outlined in the report be agreed.

Background papers:

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Nil

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Chief Leisure Officer