

## **ROCHFORD MARKET TOWN FUNDING**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report brings to Members' attention the County Council's decision to allocate a sum of £50,000 to fund initiatives in association with the market town of Rochford. The County Council is now seeking proposals as to how that allocation should be spent.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 As part of its 2005/06 budget process, the County Council have allocated a total of £250,000 towards the regeneration of five market towns in Essex – Canvey, Halstead, Harwich, Rochford and Saffron Walden. Each has been allocated £50,000 to spend on projects that support priorities identified by the selected towns which improve the local economy and environment for local residents.
- 2.2 In allocating money to each of these five market towns, the County have asked for suggestions from the local District Councils, Parish Councils and community groups, such as the Rochford Regeneration Group which has undertaken the Market town Health Check study in Rochford. The County wishes to work with these parties in progressing one or more suitable schemes which can be funded from the monies allocated.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The criteria suggested by the County to assess any bids that come forward are:
- (a) environmental or regeneration benefit
  - (b) the ability to attract other external funding to increase the impact of the funding
  - (c) the potential to add value to other projects being undertaken or planned for the town,
  - (d) capability of being completed by August 2006

- 3.2 The County advise that suitable projects identified in Health Checks or other audits of the towns which may have emerged from community planning processes would be particularly welcome.
- 3.3 Locally, the process for determining projects will be through the consideration of possible proposals by the Rochford Local Strategic Partnership later this month, with the final decision resting with the Chairman of the County's South Area Forum, County Cllr. Ray Howard.

#### **4 SUITABLE PROJECTS**

- 4.1 In terms of projects which this Council might like to promote given the criteria outlined, it would seem reasonable to propose those suitable suggestions outlined in the Market Town Healthcheck Study, which was reported to this Committee in April (min 151/205). Those proposals considered suitable include the following:
- Improved lighting in Back Lane and Church Road
  - Review of traffic management operation in and around the Market square and the implementation of any findings
  - Property Refurbishment scheme, say linked to listed buildings and other buildings in the Conservation Area
  - Further CCTV provision
- 4.2 Another project that Members might like to consider which complements the Regeneration Project's aspirations in terms of enhancement would be to focus on improvements to the town's main gateways – South Street junction; West Street junction; North Street/Weir Pond Road; and Weir Pond Road/East Street.
- 4.3 The latter two in particular offer significant opportunities for improvements. Improvements might include revised signage, visual improvements to the islands, new features to identify that traffic is entering the town centre, panels in the road surface, etc.

#### **5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This Essex County Council funding stream has the potential to contribute towards the environmental quality of Rochford town and its environs.

#### **6 PARISH IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The project relates to the Rochford Parish Council area.

**7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The key resource expenditure from this Authority is likely to be in Member and Officer time rather than in terms of additional funding at this stage, although complementary funding may be considered in certain instances.

**8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 That it is proposed Committee **RESOLVE** which projects to put forward for further discussion with the Parish, the Regeneration Project Group and Essex County Council, with a view to ensuring that the £50,000 allocated by the County Council is spent by August 2006.

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**Background Papers:-**

Rochford Regeneration Group – Rochford Market Town Healthcheck Study – November 2004

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