

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL FOR RURAL SKILLS PROGRAMME

Summary: To present a development proposal for the Rural Skills programme.

Recommendation: That the development proposal approved by the Task and Finish Group is considered and adopted.

Officer Ref: Edward Bonn, Rural Skills and Grants Officer (01451 862000)

Background

Progress to Date

1. The Board began delivering rural skills training courses in 2002 after receiving funding from the National Lottery for the 'Caring for the Cotswolds' project. As part of Caring for the Cotswolds the Board delivered a 5 year programme of subsidised dry-stone walling courses with the objective of training up the next generation of dry-stone wallers in the Cotswolds. The programme included providing training up to LANTRA Level 2 standard.
2. At the end of the project the Board decided it wished to continue offering rural skills training. However, the courses were no longer to be subsidised and instead the programme would aim to be financially self-sufficient, i.e. income from course fees covering the direct expenditure of the programme including staff time.
3. The breadth of courses offered by the Board has expanded since 2005. In 2018/19, courses included:
 - dry-stone walling
 - hedgelaying
 - woodland coppicing
 - lime mortar
 - thatching
 - spoon carving
 - stool making
 - blacksmithing
 - stone carving
 - wool weaving
 - scything
 - horse logging
 - flax-making
 - bird identification

The Rural Skills programme also includes the Rural Skills Academy, which delivers Lantra Level 1 and 2 dry-stone walling courses and Lantra brush-cutter courses.

4. The newly established Rural Skills programme for schools has generated a balance of £2,435 since its commencement in March 2018, from expenditure of £4,527 and income of £6,962.
5. The Rural Skills programme is well established and has now reached capacity in terms of its range and number of courses. Additional staffing is required to develop the programme further.

6. A Task and Finish group for Rural Skills has completed 4 meetings since Monday 11th June 2019, culminating in a recommendation from members to present the costed development proposal in **Appendix 'A'** and **'B'**.

Current position of Rural Skills programme

Current estimate for the financial position of the Rural Skills programme at the end of the 2018/19 financial year is a deficit of £6.5K, once costs of the annual hedge-laying competition have been removed.

The 2018/19 financial year also concluded with a Rural Skills programme which has increased in the number and range of courses delivered. The total number of participants throughout 2018/19 was 564 trainees, exceeding the target of 530. Overall, 72 courses were delivered for the core programme, exceeding the target of 55 courses per annum.

Supporting Paper(s):

Appendix 'A' - Proposal for Rural Skills development programme.

Appendix 'B' - Costed Rural Skills programme development model.