

## REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PARK DIRECTION AND PLANNING

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### **SUBJECT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SDF) – CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATION**

#### Purpose of Report:

To inform members of the proposed new arrangements for the administration of the SDF.

#### Background

The fund was originally administered in house. The post holder left the position in early 2018 and a new post holder took up the position in August 2018 but for personal reasons left the Authority on 3 October 2018.

This was disappointing and has resulted in a void in the consideration of applications to the fund. Potential recipients have been advised of the issue and their submissions put on hold.

The post was a 22 hour per week permanent position, and there were other duties apart from the administering of the grant that this post holder undertook. For example, Environmental policies and waste management certification are also part of the post's responsibilities. These areas of work will remain inhouse and redistributed to existing members of staff.

There is a current estimate that the SDF administration of the position could be undertaken in 10 hours per week. Much of the work can be done through emails and phone calls. There would be a requirement within this time allocation to attend SDF committee meetings to allow members to consider the applications as they did previously. There is the opportunity to refine the system and processing of applications especially now that the grant is purely funded by PCNPA and there is no European or WG money which requires differing monitoring regimes.

#### Partnership working

The PCNPA has a good record of effective partnership working and has been approached by *Partnerships for Local Action and Networks for Enterprise and Development* - PLANED to undertake the administration of the SDF.

We already have a similar partnership with PAVS which administers the PCNPA Little Green Grant fund on our behalf.

Some members may not be familiar with PLANED; it makes the following comments on its website:

*PLANED is a community-led partnership established as a social enterprise, a Development Trust, a charity, and a company limited by guarantee, with its Board members being representatives from communities and from the public and private sectors.*

*We have over 30 years' experience of implementing integrated rural development through supporting enterprise, sustainable agriculture and tourism, heritage and environmental activities, through community engagement and participation.*

*We encourage a community culture of enterprise supporting people to harness their skills, knowledge and enthusiasm –to safeguard their future. This is achieved through delivering locally tailored initiatives, which build on existing community strengths and empower local people, while ensuring effort in one area of development adds value to other areas.*

*We are an organisation that works with geographic communities and communities of interest to identify, develop and implement sustainable projects that improve the wellbeing of the community with a focus on long-term, integrated, collaborative actions.*

### PLANED's proposal

1. PLANED will support the administration of the application process from EOI's through to final Project Proposal and presentation, working with PCNPA colleagues.
2. PLANED will offer and deliver first point of contact support for applicants, working with PCNPA colleagues to gain further direction and information as necessary.
3. PLANED will maintain and administer the grant claim process including notifications, meetings, claims and payments.
4. PLANED will maintain and administer all the evidence required to support project claims, monitoring, payments, and subsequent audits.
5. PLANED will establish quarterly meetings with PCNPA colleagues to review and challenge the administration process to maximise its continued effectiveness for partners.
6. PLANED will use its existing effective and established project monitoring and administrative expertise to support the Fund, and manage the outputs and time of those involved.
7. PLANED will use existing excellent project management personnel and procedures to oversee the project and appropriate officers.

To be clear, PLANED would administer the fund, but not make any decision on which projects would benefit from the fund. The decision to fund any project would remain with the SDF panel, which would continue to run as it does now.

### Financial considerations

The offer by PLANED is to administer the fund for the same rate as it pays its current staffing, including on-costs this would amount to just under £11,000 per annum. For the duration of the pilot this has been capped to provide budgetary confidence to the Authority and the benefit of a guaranteed income to PLANED for the pilot period.

Next year's SDF budget stands at £100,000 and there will be underspend from this year budget of about £50,000 that will be rolled over too.

### Risk considerations

That the pilot scheme will not work effectively and the position needs to be brought back in house with the resultant delays in recruitment.

That the reputation of the PCNPA will be tarnished should the pilot scheme bring the fund into disrepute.

The PLANED workforce has an excellent reputation for administering funds and assisting organisations and communities to access funding. PLANED also administers the LEADER funding and perform the administrative function of this.

### Conclusion

With the need to look for more effective ways of work it would be an appropriate time to reconsider the administration of the fund and for a trial period of 15 months enter an agreement to procure this through partnership with PLANED.

### Recommendation

That members support the proposal for partnership working with PLANED for a trial period to administer the Sustainable Development Fund on behalf of PCNPA.

### Background Documents

*(For further information, please contact Tegryn Jones, Jane Gibson)*

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