

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 27 APRIL 2004

EXMOOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND

Report of the Head of Planning & Community

Purpose of Report:

To advise members of the progress of the Sustainable Development Fund and seek support for the future management and delivery of the Fund on Exmoor.

Legal Implications including Human Rights Act 1998:

Authority for expenditure of the fund is provided by s65 and s72 Environment Act 1995.

No Human Rights Act 2000 implications

Financial Implications:

The Fund has offered a total of £352,478 in grants as of 31 March 2004 (£140,612 in 2002/3 and £211,866 in 2003/4). A further £32,500 (10% of the DEFRA £325,000 SDF income) of the Fund has been spent on staff, administration, promotion and Independent Panel costs. The total commitments are therefore £59,978 over income.

£200,000 has been received from DEFRA for the Fund in 2004/5. Allowing 10% for administration, adding actual under-spend of one project (£312.50) and noting the carried over over-spend and the £16,000 of grant aid offered at the 1 April 2004 Panel meeting, there remains £104,334 for grants in 2004/5.

Anticipated under-spend by three of the existing projects is £12,251.

National Park Purposes:

All Sustainable Development Fund projects must be compatible with National Park Purposes.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is recommended: -

- To NOTE the projects offered grant aid (Appendix 1) and the impacts of these projects.
- To NOTE the work of the Independent Grant Advisory Panel and their quarterly meeting cycle.

1. **Impacts of the Projects Offered Grant Aid**

- 1.1 Twenty projects, which will benefit 774 young people and over 300 businesses, involving 50 community and voluntary groups through 26 new partnerships have been offered grant aid from the Exmoor Sustainable Development Fund during 2003/4.

- 1.2 An Independent Advisory Panel of twelve individuals who live and work across the National Park have added to the projects as they have been devised and delivered.
- 1.3 Administered by Exmoor National Park Authority, the 20 grants offered total £211,866. This is matched by another £300,834 of private and public cash, as well as £63,555 of gifted time and materials.
- 1.4 This year's activity follows on from the successful first year of the Exmoor Sustainable Development Fund (ExSDF) when 16 projects were offered £140,612, leveraging another £588,175 of private and public cash, as well as £59,381 of gifted time and materials. These 16 projects benefited 932 young people and 524 businesses, through 28 new partnerships involving 19 community and voluntary organisations.
- 1.5 Across all of the 36 projects, nine involve linking local rural people and activities with urban groups. Eleven projects provide models of sustainable development which could be replicated elsewhere, whilst thirteen are and will continue after the ExSDF grant aid has been spent.

2 Future Management and Delivery of the Fund

- 2.1 Due to £104,334 being available for grants during the rest of 2004/5, the Independent Grant Advisory Panel and the National Park Officer have agreed that decisions will be made quarterly (June, September, December and February), as opposed to the previous 6 weekly decision making cycles.

Phil Cookson
Sustainable Development Officer
14 April 2004

Background papers on which this report, or an important part of it are based, constitute the list of background papers required by Section 100 D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to be open to members of the public comprise:-

Appendix 1 – Projects Offered SDF grant aid at 14 April 2004