



Ryedale District Council

REPORT TO: Policy and Resources Committee

DATE: 28 June 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Janet Waggott
Chief Executive

SUBJECT: **Budget provision for SPARSE Blue Skies Conference**

WARDS AFFECTED: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Chairman of the Council has asked the Chief Executive to report to Policy & Resources Committee to request that Members make a budget provision of £500 from the Civic Hospitality budget. The purpose of this is to promote Ryedale District Council and contribute to a successful Sparse Authorities Blue Skies Conference which is being held in Ryedale on the 22-24 July 2007.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. To agree a one off budget of £500 to provide a mini bus, driver and to host a dinner for colleagues from other authorities and promote Ryedale within the SPARSE Authority network

3.0 REASONS SUPPORTING DECISION

To promote a vibrant District and use the opportunity to publicise Ryedale and promote our achievements beyond North Yorkshire to contribute and influence the work of Sparse Blue Skies over the forthcoming year.

4.0 BACKGROUND

The Chairman of the Council is the external representative on the SPARSE Authority. The Chairman has asked that this request is considered by Members.

SPARSE is a Special Interest Group of the LGA and comprises County, District, and unitary Local Authorities. It seeks to represent the views of over 8.4 million people living in the most rural areas of England. The area it's member authorities cover exceeds one quarter of England.

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SPARSE as a cross party apolitical group, works to give a voice to local authorities working in very rural England and to the people and communities who live and work there.

SPARSE has recently established a sister group for all major public service providers serving the most rural areas with some 200 members and is known as the Rural Services Partnership (RSP).

SPARSE and the RSP are acting as the secretariat of a new All Party Rural Services Parliamentary Group operating within Westminster.

The annual Blue Skies Meeting moves around the country, its purpose is to set the rural agenda in terms of issues of high importance to all rural areas in the country.

5.0 OPTIONS

Members do not have to make this budget provision. Members could choose not to fund the hospitality for the Sparse Blue Skies conference and provide dinner and a mini bus however this is not recommended. This is a modest budget provision which can be afforded and has potential Public Relation benefits which outweigh the costs. This is an opportunity to promote Ryedale and influence SPARSE in their service considerations over the next year. This is the first time the Blue Skies Conference has been held in Yorkshire and it is appropriate to offer a contribution to the success of the conference.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total contribution Members are being asked to approve is a maximum of £500 which is required to fund a minibus and driver to take the delegates around Ryedale and contribute to the cost of an evening meal

7.0 CONCLUSION

Members are asked to approve this contribution to a successful conference.

Background Papers:

OFFICER CONTACT:

Please contact Janet Waggott, Chief Executive if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The officer can be contacted at Ryedale House, 01653 600666 ext 200 and e-mail janet.waggott@ryedale.gov.uk