

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **24 November 2005**

By: **Director of Adult Social Care**

Title of report: **Community Partnership Finance Grant 2006-2007**

Purpose of report: **To present the recommendations of the Community Partnership Finance Panel on the allocation of the grant to voluntary organisations in 2006-2007**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services is recommended to note the provisional recommendations made for the allocation of the Community Partnership Finance Grant in 2006/2007.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 Providing no changes are made as part of the Reconciling Policy & Resources exercise or any other change of policy, it is likely that the CPF budget for 2006/2007 will be £347,400 plus £14,800 for Substance Misuse (This is an inflationary increase of 2.2% on the current year's budgets).

2. Background and Supporting Information

2.1 The Community Partnership Finance grant scheme funds a range of voluntary and community groups and Councils for Voluntary Service across the county. A Steering Group comprising East Sussex County Council, other public sector agencies and the voluntary sector, undertook a thorough review of this scheme during December 2004 - March 2005. The recommendations for improving the scheme and the revised application packs were consulted on from 18 March 2005 - 27 May 2005. The Steering Group met once more to discuss the consultation responses on 8 June 2005 and further improvements were made taking account of the feedback. The new information packs were sent out in July 2005.

2.2 The closing date for completed applications for Community Partnership Finance Grant 2006/2007 was Friday, 30 September 2005. A total of 51 applications have been received, including 13 new schemes. One organisation was not eligible as it had applied for less than £1000. It was also noted that although currently funded this year, MIND and Home-Start Hastings & Rother had not submitted application forms for 2006/2007. The first stage checks and the scoring of forms took place at the beginning of October 2005. All of the applications have been scored independently by the Grants Co-ordinator and the External Funding Officer and the average score taken. A copy of the guidance used to score the applications was circulated to all the applicants and is attached as **Appendix 1**. It was noted that there are some discrepancies between the application form and the scoring sheet and that these have made one question in particular difficult to score (B4).

2.3 The Panel, comprising of senior officers from both Adult Social Care and Children & Families, met on 25 October 2005 and agreed the following recommendations for the allocation of the grant in 2006/2007: (A summary detailing the final recommendations is attached as **Appendix 2**).

- On this occasion only, the panel agreed that the scoring threshold be lowered by five points across all three funding categories as there was concern about the problems in scoring question B4 and the difficulties some organisations had in completing question B8 concerning risks.

- New Schemes - those organisations that met the revised scoring threshold should be allocated the amount they have requested, except where there were concerns about financial information.
- Existing Schemes - organisations that met the revised scoring threshold to receive their current year's funding plus 50% uplift (50% of the difference between current grant and what they have requested for 2006/2007). The only exceptions to this were:
 - (a) organisations that had requested a significant increase to their existing funding;
 - (b) The Council's Finance Officer has deemed them "financially unacceptable" or the panel had concerns about an organisation's finances/information contained in the application.
- Substance Misuse - two applications have been received (Action for Change Eastbourne and Action for Change Hastings), totalling £16,294. It was agreed to allocate these two schemes 50% of the difference between what they currently receive and what they have requested, i.e. £7,167 each. The remaining £466 is to be added to the main CPF budget.
- Three Year Agreements - one of the recommendations from the review was that no new three-year contracts will be awarded in 2006/2007, pending the outcome of the Review of Voluntary Sector Partnerships. There are five organisations currently in the second year of a three year agreement. Bexhill Community Partnership has not submitted an application for its third year, as it is part of the new Rother Voluntary Action CVS bid. The Panel recommended that the other four organisations receive their current funding plus 2.2% for 2006/2007.
- Unallocated Grant - £15,314 to be allocated as follows:
 - i. £2,000 to be allocated to each of the 5 CVSs for their local community chests/small grant to fund organisations to bid for funding of less than £1,000.
 - ii. £5,314 be set aside as a discretionary grant.
- That the Panel meet to review the process and make any further recommendations for the Community Partnership Finance Grant in 2007/2008.
- That a workshop be arranged next year to help and advise organisations about the process and completing the application forms

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the recommendations for the allocation of the Community Partnership Finance Grant to voluntary organisations in 2006/2007.

3.2 The final report on the recommendations of the allocation of the grant will be submitted to the Lead Member for Children & Families and the Lead Member for Adult Social Care in December 2005.

3.3 A letter will be sent to each voluntary organisation who has applied for funding following the meetings of the Lead Members, to inform them of their recommended funding. They will not, however, receive confirmation of funding until after the Council budget meeting in February 2006.

3.4 This is the first allocation of the CPF grant following the review of the scheme and it is acknowledged some amendments are required to the application pack for 2007/08. This will be undertaken when the Panel meet to review this year's process.

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