

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 12 APRIL 2005

BELLSBANK WOMEN'S PROJECT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT EVALUATION

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Policy and Resources Committee of the outcome of the evaluation of the Service Level Agreement with Bellsbank Women's Project and to make recommendations accordingly.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Bellsbank Women's Project was established as an Urban Aid Project in 1983 with the aim 'to provide educational opportunities for women living in the communities of Bellsbank and surrounding areas that will enable them to develop and realise their full potential as individuals, parents and active citizens'.
- 2.2** At the end of the Urban Aid funding, the project received annual funding from Strathclyde Regional Council and from 1996, East Ayrshire Council. Since 1999 East Ayrshire Council has agreed Service Level Agreements with the Project's Management Committee, which set targets for the Project and required annual monitoring to access subsequent years funding.
- 2.3** The funding received from East Ayrshire Council allows the Project to employ a Project Coordinator for 20 hours per week and an administrative assistant for 10 hours per week. It delivers courses and classes by employing sessional staff. In addition the Project supports adults returning to learning by offering crèche provision if required.

3. REPORT

- 3.1** Specific objectives of the Project include the provision of:
- a wide range of learning opportunities in the form of courses/classes and self help groups
 - targeted provision to those women who are socially excluded, in particular women on low income and lone parents
 - provision of activities in the context of lifelong learning, addressing social exclusion to improve health, increase skills, raise confidence and increase community participation
 - breaking down barriers that may prevent members from participating through the provision of childcare, subsidies and transport.
- 3.2** The aims and objectives of the Project are compatible with East Ayrshire's Community Plan.

3.3 All services are provided in a socially inclusive way that fosters equality of opportunity and promotes active citizenship.

4. PERFORMANCE

4.1 Bellsbank Women's Project was subject to an evaluation by the Department of Educational and Social Services, Performance and Development Team.

4.2 The evaluation concluded that the Project's values, aims and terms are clearly in accordance with the terms of the Core Service Level Agreement and its Agreement Schedule.

4.3 Self evaluation has become embedded in the Project and taken in conjunction with the Annual Report for 2003-2004, key performance measures are addressed. In addition, the Crèche is subject to Care Commission inspections.

4.4 Service user evaluations were included in the Project's self evaluation and staff and stakeholders were consulted by questionnaires. All contributors agreed that the project was successfully addressing its stated aims, that the project was well managed and committed to service improvement and that it was in touch with and responsive to the needs of the community.

4.5 In response to levels of male unemployment in Bellsbank, the project developed further to target educational programmes to men through the "Men's Project". This is funded by the Social Inclusion Partnership.

4.6 In 2004/05, over 100 new members took part in programmes and over 30 people were involved in self help groups. Other classes include confidence building and healthy cooking and just under 50 places were taken up. Just under 200 people became involved in "one-off" activities including involvement with the Credit Union, the launch of a computer suite and Tai-chi.

5. SUMMARY

5.1 The evaluation process for the Project has provided evidence that the Project is clearly addressing its stated aims as well as the aims, values and priorities of the Council.

5.2 In particular the Project has developed a clear approach to enabling women in the Bellsbank and surrounding areas to realise their full potential through the provision of a range of learning opportunities and activities to break down barriers.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 In 2004/2005 the project was awarded £21,712.

7.2 In 2004/05 the project successfully attracted external funding, including Social Inclusion Partnership funding of £66,000 for the Men's Project and refurbishment.

7.3 An award of £22,000 will be made through Community Regeneration funding subject to Communities Scotland approval for the Men's Health Initiative.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members of the Policy and Resources Committee are asked to:

- (i) remit the development of a third Service Level Agreement with Bellsbank Women's Project for the period 2005/2008 to officers;
- (ii) approve an annual award of £22,363 to the Project which includes an inflationary uplift; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

15 March 2005
KG/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Service Level Agreement Evaluation Report

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR