EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EMERGENCY POWERS COMMITTEE – 14 JANUARY 2004

BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FUND (BNSF) ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise Committee of additional Better Neighbourhood Services Fund (BNSF) resources allocated to East Ayrshire by the Scottish Executive for 2004/05.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 East Ayrshire Council and its community planning partners received £6.75 million additional resources to cover the period 2001 – 2004 to tackle deprivation and disadvantage within the pathfinder area of North-west Kilmarnock and Shortlees/Riccarton.

2.2 The Local Outcome Agreement (LOA), in which the priorities to be tackled were identified, was approved at the Emergency Powers Committee of 22 November 2001 and subsequently endorsed by the Scottish Executive on the 13 December 2001.

2.3 The Policy and Resources Committee of 2 October 2003 approved the BNSF Annual Report for 2003 (agenda item 16). This was submitted to the Scottish Executive on 3 October 2003 to allow the necessary ongoing release of funds from the Executive.

3. ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATION 2004/05

3.1 The Scottish Executive advised the Chief Executive, in writing on 18 December 2003, that they considered progress on East Ayrshire's pathfinder to be 'very good'. As a result of this, the Executive has confirmed the final allocation of the first tranche of BNSF funding for 2003/04 of £3 million.

3.2 The letter also advised of an additional financial allocation of £2.25 million for 2004/05 to allow East Ayrshire to 'build on and consolidate BNSF services and achievements to date'.

3.3 To secure the additional resources of £2.25 million for 2004/05, the Council and its community planning partners require to:

- confirm, by 16 January 2004, acceptance of the award and compliance with the conditions of grant as set out in the Executive's letter of 18 December 2003;
- update and revise the existing Local Outcome Agreement (LOA) by 31 January 2004, and consider including a limited number of health outcome indicators to reflect the impact of health activities funded;
- prepare a 'Year 4' LOA, which will require to be formally agreed through the community planning process and receive Ministerial approval; the 'Year 4' LOA will then form the basis of awarding BNSF funds for 2004/05.

3.4 The Executive has advised that 2004/05 funding should **not** be used to support new services/projects or to fund capital projects with a value in excess of £50,000.

3.5 The purpose of the 2004/05 funding allocation is to achieve the outputs and outcomes set out in the new 'Year 4' LOA. Funding can therefore be used to continue existing BNSF services/projects for a longer time period/and or to enhance the scale, impact or duration of the most effective existing BNSF initiatives. The focus of the resources should also remain within the most disadvantaged pathfinder communities.

4. 'YEAR 4' LOCAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

4.1 In developing and agreeing the 'Year 4' LOA, local authorities and their community planning partners are required to demonstrate that they have assessed the effectiveness of existing services/projects in terms of the achievement of outcomes.

4.2 The 'Year 4' LOA and the allocation of BNSF funds to particular services/projects should also take account of:

- core funding being provided by local authorities and their community planning partners; and
- additional Scottish Executive funding streams, such as funding for community wardens and other initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour.

4.3 Local authorities and their community planning partners will also be expected to demonstrate a financial commitment to sustaining effective BNSF services/projects in the future. This will continue to be a key feature of future BNSF annual reports.

4.4 As yet, a timescale for the production of the 'Year 4' LOA has not been issued by the Executive.

5. EVALUATION

5.1 During 2004/05, pathfinders must undertake an evaluation of the impact of the overall BNSF programme. Guidance on the evaluation process will be issued early in 2004 and all evaluations must be complete by 31 March 2005.

5.2 Financial provision for this evaluation has already been secured from existing BNSF resources.

6. POLICY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 In line with existing guidance, the Council requires to keep and maintain adequate and proper financial records of accounts, recording all receipts and expenditure of monies paid to it by Scottish Ministers by way of the BNSF award. These records require to be kept for two years after payment of the final instalment of the BNSF award.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Committee is asked to:

i) note the confirmed financial allocation for 2003/04;
ii) note and accept the additional allocation of resources for 2004/05;
iii) remit Council Officers, in consultation with the Council Leader and relevant Local Members, to prepare outline priority spending proposals for the additional 2004/05 allocation; and thereafter, submit the 'Year 4' LOA to the relevant Council Committee and community planning partners for approval prior to submission to the Executive
iv) remit Council Officers to make the necessary returns to the Scottish Executive to secure the additional resources for 2004/05; and
v) otherwise note the content of the report.

Fiona Lees
Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources
6 January 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Better Neighbourhood Services Fund (BNSF) – Letter from the Scottish Executive with attached Guidelines and Conditions of Funding: 18 December 2003. Copies of this letter are available from Gwen Barker, Community Planning and Partnership Manager, Tel: 01563 554602.

Members wishing further information on this report should contact Gwen Barker, Community Planning and Partnership Manager, Tel: 01563 554602.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: Gwen Barker