

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 21 FEBRUARY 2002

BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FUND - UPDATE

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a progress report on the establishment of the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund (BNSF) programme within North-west Kilmarnock and Shortlees/Riccarton.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members approved the BNSF Local Outcome Agreement (LOA) and associated programme of projects, for submission to the Scottish Executive, at the Emergency Powers Committee of 22 November 2001.
- 2.2 At this meeting members also agreed to remit the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Policy & Resources, Local Elected Members and community planning partners, to implement the year 1 programme of projects immediately on receipt of approval of the LOA from the Scottish Executive.

3. SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE APPROVAL

- 3.1 The Scottish Executive approved the Local Outcome Agreement, associated programme of projects and delineated pathfinder area on 13 December 2001.
- 3.2 East Ayrshire Council's submission was one of the first to be approved by the Executive, with not all submissions receiving Executive approval. As a consequence of this the budget allocation to East Ayrshire has been reprofiled by the Executive to ensure the £20m set aside nationally for BNSF development in 2001/02 is fully committed. The Executive has guaranteed end of year flexibility on spend and therefore East Ayrshire's financial allocation is as follows:
- 2001/02 - £1.9million
 - 2002/03 - £1.85million
 - 2003/04 - £3million
- 3.3 The Scottish Executive has advised that year two and three allocations are dependent on satisfactory progress being made against the set outcome targets.
- 3.4 In addition to the above allocation the Scottish Executive offered the Council and its community planning partners £25,000 to assist with the collation of information to identify the current mainstream spend going into the pathfinder area. The Director of Finance is currently working to compile this information, by the due date of 31 March 2002.

3.5 As a result of the Scottish Executive's Spring Budget Revision exercise, further resources have become available and a grant of £150,000 has been made available to East Ayrshire Council, with the following two conditions:

- the grant should be used to set against expenditure which the Council (or its community planning partners) has incurred so far, or will incur between 29 March on BNSF; and
- that from the overall BNSF allocation, provided from the Scottish Executive, the Council will allocate an amount at least equivalent to that of the £150k to BNSF baseline data collection and the monitoring and evaluation of the LOA between 2001-2004.

3.6 The Council has taken up this additional grant offer and officers are currently working internally and with community planning partners to collate the necessary information to recharge the Executive for set up costs.

4. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

4.1 Members will recall that prior to developing the BNSF Local Outcome Agreement a comprehensive community consultation exercise was held. To ensure continued involvement in shaping the BNSF agenda a successful planning event targeted at community representatives was held on Saturday 8 December 2001. This event was attended by over 50 community representatives and participants expressed an interest in further such events.

4.2 To ensure continued community involvement a further community event will be held in early March 2002. Individual projects will also require to ensure regular community consultation in shaping the delivery of their initiative.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 A range of steps have been taken to ensure the effective implementation of the projects receiving funding in year one (2001-02). All projects have been allocated a lead officer and have developed implementation plans to ensure that projects receiving funds are appropriately managed.

5.2 A range of new appointments have been advertised, contracts have been placed and interim measures put in place in respect of environmental improvements and the action on voids programme to ensure maximum local impact and full spend on the project budget this financial year.

5.3 Lead officers are due to meet on the 20 February 2002 to provide an update on progress and plan appropriate expenditure and delivery for programmes receiving funding in 2002/03.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 NIL

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 NIL

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that committee:

- i) note the additional allocation of £150,000 to the Council, as detailed at section 3.5 and remit the Director of Finance to ensure the appropriate returns are made to the Scottish Executive;
- ii) request future reports on the implementation of the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund programme; and otherwise
- iii) note the content of the report.

Fiona Lees
Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources
4 February 2002

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

For further information on this report contact Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive.

AGENDA