

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 5 APRIL 2001

BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FUND

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

0.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 0.1** To update members on information received from the Scottish Executive on the use of the new Better Neighbourhood Services Fund, and to propose that the council prepares the case for identifying Shortlees/Riccarton and Northwest Kilmarnock as Better Neighbourhood pilot areas for discussion with community planning partners and the Scottish Executive.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1** At its meeting on 8 March 2001, the council noted the steps that had been taken by the council Leader and Chair of Social Inclusion to seek maximum flexibility for councils in determining how the additional resources made available from the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund could be used.
- 1.2** In addition, the council's position was explained further to both the Finance Minister and the Minister for Social Justice at the recent CoSLA Convention meeting. Clarification has now been received from the Scottish Executive confirming that it is up to the council and its community planning partners to identify those areas that should be supported from the Better Neighbourhood Services Funds (although the formal notification of the award and spending guidelines/conditions has still to be received). Where councils and community planning partners choose to use these funds outwith formally designated SIPs, then the case should be made on a neighbourhood basis.
- 1.3** East Ayrshire Council has been allocated £1.5m from the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund for the year 2001/02 rising to £3m in the year 2003/04. The Fund is designed to enable local authorities and their community planning partners to improve services to those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The resources should be used to develop the quality and or quantity of local services so as to deliver real and substantial improvements for local people. Neighbourhoods should be selected where the funds can be applied in sufficient concentration to make a positive difference within the neighbourhood.
- 1.4** The council therefore requires to meet with its community planning partners to agree where and how the funds should be used.
- 1.5** To guide those discussions, it is proposed that the council prepares a detailed case for consideration with community planning partners, and subsequently with the Scottish Executive, for using the funds available to East Ayrshire within the Shortlees/Riccarton neighbourhood and the Northwest Kilmarnock neighbourhood.
- 1.6** These areas have been selected using an initial assessment of poverty and deprivation indicators based on unemployment rates, free school meals and footwear and clothing grants. Using these indicators, it is clear that these areas have levels of poverty that are dramatically higher than elsewhere in East Ayrshire.

1.7 It is proposed that a detailed case for the application of the funds in these areas is prepared by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources, for discussion with community planning partners, local members and community representatives in Shortlees/Riccarton and North West Kilmarnock. These proposals to contain a detailed description of boundaries and an indication of the priorities for the application of the funds.

1.8 Assuming support for the use of the funds, the case will then be made to the Scottish Executive to formally designate these areas as neighbourhoods eligible for funding from the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund. The eventual outcome of this process will be reported back to a future Policy and Resources Committee.

2.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The provision of these additional funds by the Scottish Executive provides an opportunity to extend our social inclusion approach to some of the neighbourhoods with pressing poverty and deprivation problems that are not currently served by the wider area based, and government funded, Social Inclusion Partnership.

3.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Nil

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The sums made available to the council are £1.5m in 2001/02, £2.25m in 2002/03 and £3m in 2003/04.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee, to prepare proposals for using the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund within the neighbourhoods of Shortlees/Riccarton and Northwest Kilmarnock for discussion with community planning partners and the Scottish Executive, and
- (ii) to bring a further detailed report to a future Policy and Resources Committee detailing how the funds will be used, and the outcomes that will be secured in these communities, subject to final Scottish Executive endorsement.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Correspondence between the Council Leader and the Minister for Social justice.

For further information on this report please contact Douglas I Campbell, Head of Corporate Development and Communication on (01563) 576165.

Fiona Lees

Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

2 April 2001

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AGENDA