

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 14 JUNE 2001

BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FUND

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

0.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 0.1** To update the committee on progress made to date in relation to the new Better Neighbourhood Services and to outline the timetable of future action required.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1** At its meeting on 5 April 2001, the Policy and Resources Committee noted the funding allocated by the Scottish Executive to East Ayrshire from the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund and agreed to authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources and the council's community planning partners to prepare proposals for utilising the funding within the neighbourhoods of Shortlees/Riccarton and North West Kilmarnock.

2.0 PROGRESS

- 2.1** The Executive have now issued guidance which sets out the framework within which the council should bring forward strategies for the delivery of better services within the neighbourhoods selected, details of which are summarised later in this report.
- 2.2** Officers have met with core community planning partners who have agreed that the neighbourhoods of Shortlees/Riccarton and North West Kilmarnock should be proposed to the Scottish Executive to benefit from the additional funding. In accordance with the previous decision of this Committee and the requirements of the guidance issued by the Executive, a detailed case justifying the rationale behind the selection of these communities was submitted to the Executive at the end of May.

3.0 PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF ACTION REQUIRED

- 3.1** The Executive have outlined a timetable that recognises that, whilst it is essential to ensure that action is put in place as quickly as possible, some time will be required to identify neighbourhoods, select the services that will benefit from the funding and agree outcomes with the communities concerned. Details of the indicative timetable are provided below:

End May	Submit details of neighbourhoods identified that are outwith SIP areas to the Scottish Executive for clearance. Consultation with communities begins in other areas.
End June	Authorities to submit to the Scottish Executive their service proposals for the identified areas, timetable and plan for consulting the community on services and outcomes.
Mid July	Scottish Executive comments on submission, or clearance given.
End September	Consultation with communities should be completed.
End October	Suggested Local Outcome Agreement to be submitted to the Scottish Executive for approval.
October onwards	New services begin.

4.0 KEY ELEMENTS OF ACTION REQUIRED

4.1 Establishing Baseline Service Provision

4.1.1 The Executive recognises that action is probably already in place within the neighbourhoods that are likely to be selected and recommends that partners need to map the services currently provided within the areas before deciding what additional action is required. This will include gathering information on the assets each organisation has in the area that could be used to greater effect. This process, in consultation with the council's community planning partners, is currently underway.

4.2 Identifying Services

4.2.1 Ministers have not been prescriptive about the services to be improved. They have said that emphasis should be given to services that address social justice priorities and that they would particularly welcome services for children or for the elderly. The services to be improved may be provided by several partners working together. The funding need not be used on its own to improve services and indeed it may be used to make faster improvements to services already identified and receiving mainstream funding.

4.2.2 Great emphasis has been placed on the involvement of the communities concerned in identifying services. Themes may derive from our existing knowledge of the communities or from previous consultations within the communities. At the meeting with community planning partners it was agreed that they would give consideration to the key themes for which they would want the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund to be used. These, plus the council's priorities detailed within the council plan and other key strategic policies should inform and guide the consultation with communities.

4.3 Consulting with Communities

4.3.1 The proposed method of consulting with the communities require to outlined to the Executive by the end of June. Existing consultation mechanisms may be used however, if these are not considered to be sufficient, alternative arrangements for consulting with communities will require to be agreed. This issue is currently being reviewed internally and will be taken forward with the council's community planning partners with a view to agreeing an appropriate method of consultation. It would be both appropriate and acceptable for any additional costs associated with the consultation to be met from the council's Better Neighbourhood Services Funds.

4.4. Local Outcome Agreements

4.4.1 In selecting neighbourhoods and services, authorities have been requested to consider not just the increased input that the fund will support but the specific outcomes that are being sought. These should be set out in the form of Local Outcome Agreements (LOAs). There is no single model for these agreements. The LOAs should detail how the funding will deliver improvements to key outcomes more quickly and/or to a higher level than would otherwise have been the case. Some of the outcomes will flow directly from the service inputs, others, such as enhanced community involvement, may arise from the process through which initiatives are developed and monitored. The proposed outcomes should be measurable and consistent with the aims of community planning partners and should also be relevant to the Executive's wider social justice targets.

4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

4.5.1 Ministers expect specific outcomes to be achieved from the resources allocated under the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund. Arrangements must therefore be put in place to monitor and evaluate the effect of the Fund in achieving the Local Outcome Agreement. The LOA should include details of how progress will be monitored and reported to the Scottish Executive, community planning partners and the communities involved.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil arising from this report.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any costs associated with progressing proposals for support from the Better Neighbourhoods Services Fund, such as any additional consultation, can be met from the Fund in due course.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Better Neighbourhood Services Fund initiative provides an opportunity for the council to progress the priorities contained within its council plan and key strategies within the selected communities.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the committee:-

- i) note the timetable of action required in respect of the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund;
- ii) note that consultation with the communities on the services to benefit from support from the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund will be informed by the priorities of the council and community planning partners;
- iii) agree that it be remitted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources and the council's community planning partners to determine appropriate mechanisms for consultation with the communities concerned and to submit these along with an indication of the services to be provided and outcomes sought to the Scottish Executive by 30 June 2001, and
- iv) note that a report on the consultation and proposed Local Outcome Agreement will be presented to a future Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

Fiona Lees
Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources
30 May 2001

AGENDA