

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Board members on the actions taken, following the announcement that the North Initiative was unsuccessful in its application to the New Opportunities Funding (NOF) under the Better Off Programme in relation to after care / rehabilitation for substance users.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 9 April 2003, NOF wrote advising that the Board's application had been unsuccessful for the following reasons:
- strategic fit (insufficient fit with Ayrshire & Arran Alcohol & Drug Action Team's (ADAT) Corporate Plan)
 - project planning (outcomes did not correspond sufficiently to the programme priorities)
 - management (the application did not successfully demonstrate how East Ayrshire Council would apply its experience to the effective management of the project), and
 - budget (match funding not evidenced).
- 2.2 At its meeting of the 22 May 2003 the Board agreed that further clarification was needed into the reasons why the bid was unsuccessful and that it was necessary to further inform the Board of any learning points arising from a meeting convened with NOF to discuss the reasons for their decision as detailed in 2.1.
- 2.3 In addition a letter was sent on the 3 June 2003 from Cllr Menzies to Beverley Francis, the Director of the New Opportunities Fund in Scotland. This letter sought further clarification as to why the bid had been unsuccessful and stated that we believed that the reasons given for our lack of success had been unreasonable.

3. MEETING WITH NOF

- 3.1 The Addiction Working Group met on the 4 June 2003 to discuss the reasons for the failure of the NOF application and on the 5 June a meeting took place at Council Headquarters with key members of staff from NOF. In attendance were Neil Ritch, NOF Programme Manager, Lesley Scott, NOF Case Manager, Ruth

Sheppard, Joint Commissioner / Co-ordinator at Ayrshire and Arran ADAT and Laurie Milwain, Helen Sinclair and Melvin Griffin from East Ayrshire Council.

- 3.2 East Ayrshire Council staff were informed that the funding pot of £585,000 that fell within the remit of Ayrshire and Arran ADAT had been massively oversubscribed by £1.5 million and that the competition within Ayrshire and Arran had been particularly fierce.
- 3.3 NOF apologised for the tight time scale imposed at the application stage of the bidding process and Ruth Sheppard informed the meeting that the time scales involved had impacted upon opportunities for discussion between the organisations applying for funding in Ayrshire and Arran. There was also a detrimental effect on the ability of ADAT to comment more fully on individual applications and in our case to alerting us of the impact that the split in user group within the Life Paths bid would have on the scoring of the project.
- 3.4 With particular reference to the letter received from NOF on the 9 April 2003 it was intimated that the reasons given were not articulated particularly well. The main reason for our lack of success was the client group split and not concerns in relation to the management of the project or the fact that the match funding was not sufficiently evidenced. NOF did not have any concerns with East Ayrshire Council's Educational and Social Services Department managing the project.
- 3.5 It was further made clear to us that ADAT, when scoring projects on behalf of NOF, were keen to diversify the service provider mix within the area and encourage the involvement of national organisations within addiction work in Ayrshire and Arran.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

- 4.1 Due to the funding allocation for Ayrshire and Arran being fully spent there will not be a second round of the Better Off programme.
- 4.2 European Social Fund, Priority 2, Measure 2.1 (Addressing Social Exclusion / Addressing Exclusion of Thematic Groups), is an appropriate funding stream under which to submit a Life Paths type project application but unfortunately there will not be another round of this particular measure until June 2004.
- 4.3 A meeting took place on 4 August 2003 with Mr Douglas Taylor from Momentum (previously Rehab Scotland). Momentum have been awarded NOF funding amounting to approx. £32,000 per annum to implement a community integration outreach programme for people living in Ayrshire and Arran who are challenged by drug misuse. The programme that Momentum proposes to implement and deliver is very similar in nature to the North Social Inclusion Initiative's Life Paths project and will operate primarily in Ayr and Kilmarnock. The programme will support people to access training and employment opportunities, through a

combination of sign-posting, personal development and pre-vocational activities. It will be supported by a community facilitator and have links with outdoor challenge providers.

- 4.4 Momentum has sought further funding from the European Social Fund in order to expand the scope of the programme and if successful this will necessitate match funding provision. It is hoped that the North Social Inclusion Initiative will be able to work in partnership with Momentum in Kilmarnock and if agreed by the Board provide some of the match funding needed to ensure that an increased number of East Ayrshire residents are able to access the service.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that the North Social Inclusion Initiative Board:

- i) remit the Community Planning and Partnership Manager to further explore the possibility of working in partnership with Momentum, and
- ii) otherwise, note the contents of the report.

Gwen Barker
Community Planning and Partnership Manager
30 October 2003