
REPORT TO:	Housing and Community Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM:	10
DATE OF MEETING:	05 February 2004	CATEGORY:	
REPORT FROM:	Head of Community Services	DELEGATED OPEN	
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	M Roseburgh	DOC:	
SUBJECT:	Community Partnerships Scheme	REF:	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE:	HCS07

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That members consider the recommendations of the Community Partnerships Scheme Assessment Panel and award grants totalling £43,207 to Old Post Regeneration Association, Melbourne Methodist Church, People Express, Nadins Trust, Hill Street Baptist Church, Willington Old School Trust, Emmanuel Church, Dethick Educational Trust and Staunton Harold Sailing Club subject to conditions where applicable.
- 1.2 That members consider a further award of £7,000 to Netherseal Tennis Club
- 1.3 That members agree to carry forward the remaining budget from this financial year into next financial year.
- 1.4 That members note the contents of a review of the operation of the scheme since it's reintroduction in 2002/2003.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To update members on applications for funding received by the Community Partnerships Scheme and seek approval for recommendations from the assessment panel for awards from the scheme. Further to appraise members of the findings from a review of the scheme since it's reintroduction in 2002/2003.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Community Partnership Scheme for 2003/04 has continued according to the same processes and procedures as was agreed when the scheme was launched last year. In addition to allocating grant the scheme allows for funding advice and project development support to the voluntary and community sector.
- 3.2 In total seventeen applications were received for the third and final bidding round of 2003/04 asking for £118,377 against a budget for the year of £150,000 and a remaining budget, following round 1 and 2 awards of £74,410. The panel assessed and ranked the applications according to the scheme's criteria and has made a positive recommendation to fund nine of the seventeen projects. In addition the panel

wished the committee to considering a further award of a grant to Netherseal Tennis Club whose score fell below the previously used award level. However this level had been set when the number, quality and size of applications was an unknown quantity and the budget needed to be safeguarded.

- 3.3 Although the scheme received a large number of applications at this round the amount of grant requested from organisations above the previously used cut off level was smaller than in previous rounds. In anticipation of increased demand next financial year and rather than either rushing another panel meeting before the year-end or substantially lowering the standard of awards the panel thought it more prudent to recommend carrying forward the remaining budget into the next financial year. As in the past unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback concerning their applications and invited to resubmit where appropriate.
- 3.4 The panel also agreed the scope of a review of the scheme to date to include statistical analysis of the nature and volume of applications and examination of the assessment and allocation processes. The review findings illustrate amongst other things that the scheme is generating a steady stream of enquiries and applications. Further that these are from a spread of geographical communities and encompass different organisations and different types of projects. The comparison of grant awarded to total project cost also indicates that the scheme is offering the Council a healthy funding ratio. As the scheme has only recently been reintroduced the various statistics need close monitoring to inform marketing and promotion and ensure equality of access.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 A revamped Community Partnerships Scheme was re-launched midway through 2002/03 offering capital grants of up to £25,000 to projects brought forward from the voluntary and community sector. A panel comprising of the Partnership Development Officer and three Councillors has been set up to assess projects against set criteria and then make recommendations about grant distribution to the Committee.
- 4.2 The amount of grant available for distribution through the Scheme has since been increased from £50,000 in 2002/03 to £150,000 in 2003/04. This increase in grant, the number of projects registering an interest in the scheme and the development stage of some of the projects meant three evenly spaced meetings of the assessment panel were scheduled for the year in May, September and January.
- 4.3 In addition to simply operating a grants programme the Community Partnership Scheme through the Partnership Development Officer is also able to offer some advice in relation to making funding applications, sources of funding and project development. Further in some instances the officer is able to offer direct project development support.
- 4.4 The applications considered by this meeting of the panel were primarily new projects but also contained one resubmitted application (Melbourne Athenaeum), one application brought forward from last time with some minor additional information (Staunton Harold Sailing Club) and one project previously rejected subject to resubmission but used as a scoring reference (Findern Parish Rooms).
- 4.5 The applications received and considered were as follows:

Old Post Regeneration Association (OPRA) – Toilet Conversion
(Requesting £3,500)

Melbourne Methodist Church – for provision of a youth facility
 (Requesting £10,000) N.B. Resubmission
 People Express – PA system for youth arts project
 (Requesting £7,000)
 Nadins Trust – Feasibility Study
 (Requesting £2,500)
 Hill Street Baptist Church Swadlincote – for a new entrance and toilets at the Church
 Hall
 (Requesting £5,000)
 Willington Old School Trust – Central Heating System
 (Requesting £3,457)
 Emmanuel Church – Church Hall Roof
 (Requesting £1,500)
 Dethick Educational Trust – new access and toilets to Dethick Hall
 (Requesting £10,000, later reduced to £4,250)
 Staunton Harold Sailing Club - for training boats and windsurfing
 (Requesting £6,000) N.B. previously submitted, some new information supplied
 Netherseal Tennis Club – New Clubhouse
 (Requesting £7,000)
 Sustrans – Cloud Trail Melbourne Access Improvements
 (Requesting £8,000)
 Foston and Scropton Parochial Church Council – Restoration of walls, guttering and
 drainage
 (Requesting £8,970)
 Pathway Christian Fellowship – Equipment for training courses
 (Requesting £4,200)
 Findern Parish Council - for renovations to the Parish Rooms
 (Requesting £25,000) N.B. previously submitted & used as scoring reference
 Walbrook Housing Association – Gosely Crime Prevention Scheme
 (Requesting £5,000)
 Ticknall Village Hall – improved car parking facilities
 (Requesting £2,225)
 Sustrans – Rolleston/Egginton Feasibility Study
 (Requesting £8,000)
 St Wilfred's Church Egginton – for improved access to the church
 (Requesting £1,025)
 St John's Ambulance - training materials
 Deemed ineligible

4.6 Further details of the projects have been summarised in Appendix 1.

4.7 The Community Partnerships Scheme Assessment Panel met on January 14th and scored the applications against the questions and weightings previously agreed during the relaunch of the scheme. The weighted criteria include links with corporate priorities, sustainability, value of other contributions, value for money, community involvement, risk and commitment to equal opportunities.

Appendix 2 is a table summarising the applications and some of the considerations that the panel needed to make. Alongside other information it details the scores from the appraisals, consequent project ranking, the amount requested and the running total of requests against available budget. In making the initial assessments the panel deemed that the applications from St John's Ambulance and Pathway Christian fellowship were ineligible because they were for revenue costs.

4.8 With the scoring completed the assessment panel then considered how best to distribute grants taking into consideration a number of factors, first and foremost the

scores attained through the assessment process but also judgements about how the applications scored in comparison to previous applications, about the quality of the applications, about the available budget, whether the projects were time critical, whether awards could be scaled down or up, whether projects could be usefully deferred or resubmitted pending further information and whether special conditions should be attached.

- 4.9 As a result of these deliberations the panel's recommendations were as follows. That the seven top-scoring projects (OPRA, Melbourne Methodist Church, People Express, Nadins Trust, Hill St Baptist Church, Willington Old School Trust and Emmanuel Church) should all receive full awards. (N.B. The award to people Express is subject to provision of an appropriate quote). That Dethick Educational Trust and Staunton Harold Sailing Club in joint 8th position should also receive awards. That in the case of Staunton Harold Sailing Club this should be a full award but that in the case of Dethick Educational Trust it should be an award of £4,250 fitting in with the schemes 25% eligibility criteria and cost savings identified by the panel. These two projects both scored 4.67, which has been the cut off point for allocating grants in previous rounds of the scheme. In order to be fair the panel decided to continue to use this point for determining positive recommendations to committee.
- 4.10 However whilst deliberating on the remaining eligible applications the panel wished to recommend that the Committee consider whether a grant should be awarded to Netherseal Tennis Club. Their application scored just under the previously mentioned cut off point of 4.67 at 4.50. However this cut off point was made at the start of the year when the number, quality and size of applications was an unknown quantity. At this point we know there is enough money in the budget to allow for a further award whereas when the initial decision to cut off at 4.67 was made it wasn't possible to compare all applications against available budget.
- 4.11 Compared to the other lower scoring projects the information supplied indicates that this project is of a more time critical nature as the bulk of funding is in place and a delay in starting to secure additional finance would affect membership and income.
- 4.12 At this point the panel noted that positive recommendations to committee amounted to £43,207 with an award to Netherseal taking the approvals to a potential £50,207. It was therefore considered prudent not to make any other awards at this point but to recommend carrying forward the outstanding budget of either £31,203 or £24,203 to next years scheme. Although it would be possible to either allocate the entire budget to applications received or hold a hastily convened further round and panel meeting it was thought preferable to maintain a standard at which grants were allocated. It was also noted that this round of the scheme had seen a significant increase in the number of applications but a decrease in the amount of grant requested. The panel felt larger applications in the future were likely, for example where some organisations had originally bid for feasibility work but would soon require full capital project costs. Furthermore unsuccessful projects could reapply early in the new financial year.
- 4.13 The panel's recommendation for distribution of grant following receipt of the second round of applications this financial year is therefore as follows:

Old Post Regeneration Association (OPRA) – £3,500
Melbourne Methodist Church – £10,000
People Express – £7,000
Nadins Trust – £2,500

* Hill Street Baptist Church Swadlincote – £5,000
Willington Old School Trust – £3,457
Emmanuel Church – £1,500
Dethick Educational Trust – £4,250
Staunton Harold Sailing Club - £6,000

Netherseal Tennis Club – £7,000 (subject to full committee approval)

- 4.14 When committee has agreed the allocation of resources all projects will be contacted and informed of the decision. Successful projects will then have 12 months in which to spend their award. If the grant is not spent within this time period then applicants will need to reapply unless otherwise agreed. Grant payments will be released upon receipt of invoices or independently certified completion reports. The projects will also be monitored to ensure that the aims and objectives of the project have been met.
- 4.15 In addition to making recommendations for the allocation of grant the panel also agreed the scope of a review of the scheme to date to include statistical analysis of the nature and volume of applications and examination of the assessment and allocation processes.
- 4.16 The details of the review are attached in appendix 3 and illustrate amongst other things that the scheme is generating a steady stream of enquiries and applications. Further that these are from a spread of geographical communities and encompass different organisations and different types of projects. The comparison of grant awarded to total project cost also indicates that the scheme is offering the Council a healthy funding ratio. As the scheme has only recently been reintroduced the various statistics need close monitoring to inform marketing and promotion and ensure equality of access.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The award of grants falls within the Community Partnerships budget allocation. Further it is recommended that the remaining budget be carried over into the next financial year.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The scheme contributes to a number of the Council's key aims including safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environment, promoting the health and welfare of all sections of the community, managing resources efficiently and effectively and supporting the development of the National Forest. In addition each individual project's impact on corporate priorities has been assessed as part of the appraisal process.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 The scheme maximises funding available for community investment by providing both direct funding and enabling leverage from other funding sources. It also continues to offer a direct line of communication with the voluntary and community sector that had been lost since the demise of the former Community Partnership Scheme.
- 7.2 The impact on the community and amount of community involvement in each individual project has been assessed as part of the appraisal process.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The reintroduced Community Partnerships Scheme continues to provide the District Council with an excellent means to support a variety of community partners in improving the quality of life for local residents. It also enables the community partners to lever in additional external funding to the district.

9.0 Background Papers

- 9.1 File: CPS – Returned applications and assessments Round 3 2003/04