

BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

GRANTS TO NON-HOUSING VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - REVIEW OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

15th January 2008

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report will be considered by the Budget and Performance Panel who will make recommendations based on the content of the report. These recommendations will then be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration as part of the budget process.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE SUB - PANEL

That the following recommendations be referred to Cabinet:

1. That officers explore the opportunity to offer a three year SLA for £2,000 per annum for the provision of equality and diversity assistance and advice in the district.
2. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Relate towards the rent of £6,800 per annum.
3. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to One Voice at £6,000 per annum via a joint SLA with Thumbprint if possible.
4. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Lancaster International Twinning Society at £4,100 per annum with inflation and that the Council offers assistance/promotional material where possible.
5. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Lancaster Citizens Advice Bureau at £87,300 per annum and £7,200 for rent and that the new SLA include the provision of a money advice case worker to be located in the Customer Contact Centre within Lancaster Town Hall at no additional cost to the council.
6. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Morecambe and Heysham Citizens Advice Bureau at £88,300 per annum and that the opportunity be explored for a money advice case worker to be located in the Customer

Contact Centre within Morecambe Town Hall at no additional cost to the council.

7. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to North Lancashire Victim Support at £5,000 per annum.
8. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Preston Community Transport at £12,600 with inflation per annum.
9. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Lune Valley Transport at £3,300 per annum.
10. That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Age Concern Lancashire at £7,500 per annum.
11. That the Council offers a new SLA to the Samaritans of Lancaster and District for three years at £1,500 per annum.
12. That the Council offers a new three year SLA to Thumbprint at £4,000 per annum via a joint SLA with One Voice if possible.
13. That links be made with the relevant Head of Service where appropriate to enable closer working and monitoring of services and the commissioning of relevant services.
14. That the opportunity be taken for future SLAs to be explored with existing and alternative service providers, where possible, in order to secure improved services and value for money.
15. That a Cabinet Member be appointed with responsibility for each Service Level Agreement.
16. That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to negotiate and sign Service Level Agreements in accordance with (1) to (12) above in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 All organisations receiving funding over £1,000 per annum have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Council setting out the anticipated service to be provided by the organisation and the level of funding from the Council.

These agreements were first put in place in 2002/03 for a 3 year period and were subsequently reviewed and implemented in 2005/06. Ten of the current twelve SLAs are now coming to an end and are subject to review and amendment from 1st April 2008. Two further SLAs with the CVS and the Rainbow Centre have been negotiated on a joint basis with the County Council and these run until 30th June 2009 and 31st March 2010 respectively. Those due to expire on 31st March 2008 are:

Organisation	Level of funding 2007/08
Preston Racial Equality Council	£2,300
Lancaster Citizens Advice Bureau	£87,300 plus £7,200 rent
Morecambe Citizens Advice Bureau	£88,300
Lune Valley Transport	£3,300

Preston Community Transport	£11,600
Lancaster International Twinning Society	£4,000
Age Concern Lancashire	£7,200
Victim Support	£4,600
Relate	£6,400 rent
One Voice	£5,700
Total	£227,900

This year, two additional organisations have also submitted requests for funding. These are the Samaritans of Lancaster and District and Thumbprint.

The Budget and Performance Panel is responsible for the monitoring the operation of Service Level Agreements with voluntary organisations. A Sub Panel has met and has made initial recommendations which are set out below for consideration by the Panel at this meeting. The Panel's recommendations will then be reported to Cabinet for consideration as part of the Budget process.

2.0 Proposal details

A summary of each application is set out below from the organisations requesting renewal of their existing SLA and those organisations requesting new funding:

2.1 Preston and Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council

Purpose of organisation:-

To promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups and to promote community cohesion and equality and diversity in the community.

Proposed use of funding:-

The funding will enable the organisation to meet its overheads and running costs to include secretarial and administrative costs, travelling expenses, rent, heating and equipment for the premises. The funding will be used to sustain the organisation to publicise Racial Equality Council (REC) activities in Lancaster and Morecambe.

The REC can then provide advice and support to victims of discrimination, to assist victims of racial harassment and attend meetings in Lancaster and Morecambe. The REC is the only organisation in Lancaster providing free and confidential advice and support to victims of discrimination and to victims of racial harassment. REC officers will also assist public authorities including Further & Higher Education Institutes to develop policies to promote equality and diversity. The REC will work with the Police, City Council and other agencies i.e. CAB's, Colleges etc. to help develop strategies to reduce racial violence and harassment and will advise individual victims of their rights under the law. The REC will support the Equality and Diversity Building Block to provide constructive scrutiny support and highlight areas requiring improvements. The REC is currently working in Lancaster with the following organisations to develop equality and diversity strategies and promote community cohesion; Lancaster University, Lancaster and Morecambe College, Lancaster and Morecambe CAB's and Beaumont College–Lancaster. The REC will also be promoting its discrimination service and racial harassment support in the Lancaster district. The REC has a full time solicitor providing free and confidential advice and support to victims of discrimination and two racial harassment officers. These officers are available to attend to clients in Lancaster. The REC also maintains good

liaison with various ethnic minority groups and their representatives to provide advice and support.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£5,270
	2009/2010	£5,270
	2010/2011	£5,270

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That officers explore the opportunity to offer a three year SLA for £2,000 per annum for the provision of equality and diversity assistance and advice in the district.

Officer comments:-

It is clear that the existing SLA with Preston and Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council is out of date and the Council needs to decide what type and level of service it requires delivering in the district as part of a future SLA. It is recognised that some expert advice should be available to the Council on a retainer basis as and when required, but that support should also be available to assist with casework within the district. The Council needs to be assured that the money being provided is being utilised in pursuance of the Council's own responsibilities within the district, and not those of other public bodies. There are two organisations that currently work with the Council and could both ably provide this work in the district. These organisations are Preston and Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council and National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI).

The officer suggestion is therefore that Members should firstly determine what level of provision of equality and diversity advice and assistance within the district they are seeking, and should then request officers to explore a future SLA with a relevant service provider such as Preston and Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council or NCBI.

2.2 Relate

Purpose of organisation:-

To provide high quality, safe and professional relationship counselling and psychosexual therapy.

Proposed use of funding:-

The funding will be used as part funding of the rent on the Lancaster office (based in St Leonard's House) this in turn allows Relate to deliver relationship counselling, psychosexual therapy and young peoples counselling in Lancaster. This allows Relate to see clients who could otherwise be asked to pay the full cost of their counselling. Relate do not turn anyone away. By helping couples when their relationship is in crisis Relate can help prevent family breakdown and all the ensuing problems that can be caused by this. Approx 1/3 of cases involved domestic violence and Relate counsellors work with the couple to end the violence and focus on the victims safety. Over the last two years Relate have obtained funding to train both a psychosexual therapist and a young persons counsellor and both of these services are now available in Lancaster. Clients are asked to contribute towards the cost of their counselling at a level they can afford and these contributions account for approximately 2/3 of Relates income.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£6,800
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2009/2010	£6,800
2010/2011	£6,800

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Relate towards the rent at £6,800 per annum.

2.3 One Voice (formerly DISC)

Purpose of organisation:-

To promote the relief of disabled people in the district through the provision of information and advice on issues which affect disabled people, their families and carers. One Voice endeavours to support and empower a disabled person to achieve the same basic rights as the rest of the community and raise awareness around inclusion and diversity. One Voice provides disabled people with the information and skills to manage their own requirements and promote an environment that is accepting of this shift of responsibility and provides disabled people, their facilities and carers with effective, efficient and accessible information in a variety of forms.

Proposed use of funding:-

The funding will be used towards the continuation and development of the information and support service, currently this is £5,700. One Voice will continue the provision of 150 hours per week of volunteer support and providing information and support to 900-1000 enquiries per year (an increase of 300-400). One Voice will continue access to a free internet service and an enquiry line staffed Monday – Friday 10am-3pm. They will raise awareness of disabled peoples needs, hold events and attend relevant meetings and functions. One Voice is a member of the disability forum and has access to a mystery shopper group who provide non confrontational information to improve awareness around disability.

In addition, One Voice would like to raise awareness through forum meetings and events, the website, newsletters and the production of a disability directory. One Voice want to develop online programmes to allow greater participation of people who might find it difficult or impossible because of their disability and examine methods of recruiting disabled volunteers. One Voice want to continue to review national research on the involvement of disabled volunteers to learn from existing practices and potential problems and develop readily available resources to support current and future disabled volunteers. One Voice would like to develop the free internet service into a small internet café facility and develop easier remote access by updating the website and adding accessible features to enable people to access the service and participate in projects. One example would be to have an online forum for people to participate in the new disability forum.

The amount being sought would be used to increase the hours of current staff or recruit a part time information officer to provide adequate support to sustain these developments. One Voice would also be looking for some contribution towards general running costs. To complement the work already done with the Information service, One Voice have initiated work based NVQ training for staff and will use the resources from this as part of volunteer induction process for potential information service volunteers. It is the intention to build the development of One Voice staff time to administrate Investors in People and Positive about Disabled people quality marks which will provide One Voice with clear frameworks for personal development and

organisational monitoring and evaluation tools. One Voice want to provide a more district wide provision of the information service and complement the Morecambe service with the provision of home visits and to extend the hours of current staff or recruit additional part time staff to cover an outreach facility in Morecambe and deliver outreach at a number of venues in the district including Carnforth, Caton, Heysham and Middleton.

One Voice would be open to the possibility of a joint Service Level Agreement with Thumbprint and/or Lancashire County Council.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£15,434
	2009/2010	£15,434
	2010/2011	£15,434

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to One Voice at £6,000 per annum via a joint SLA with Thumbprint if possible.

2.4 Lancaster International Twinning Society

Purpose of organisation:-

To assist in the organisation of cultural, sporting, social-economic and educational exchanges between Lancaster and its official and associated twin towns of a non civic nature. The Society aims to strengthen links between Lancaster and its official and associated twin towns.

Proposed use of funding:-

The funding will be used to assist in all aspects of twinning, to help with administration costs, to assist financially with travel costs and with hospitality for all sectors of the community in connection with twinning exchanges and to and from Lancaster and its official and associated twin towns.

The Society works in partnership with the Council in dealing with twinning requests of a non civic nature and assists with the organisation of twinning requests of a civic nature when invited to do so.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£4,100
	2009/2010	£4,200
	2010/2011	£4,300

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Lancaster International Twinning Society at £4,100 per annum with inflation and that the Council offers assistance/promotional material and resources where possible.

2.5 Lancaster Citizens Advice Bureau

Purpose of organisation:-

Through a managed approach Lancaster Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) aims to provide information, advice and assistance which is accessible, responsive to need, empowering for the client and of a consistently high quality for which there is a

continuing and increasing need. The Bureau works within the aims and principles of the CAB service to address issues raised by social exclusion. The various funding streams allows the Bureau to offer a wide range of services for the local community through assisted information, general help, specialist casework in the four areas of social welfare law: Money Advice, Housing, Employment and Welfare Benefits and representation at County Court, employment tribunals and benefit tribunals.

Proposed use of funding:-

The Bureau will provide a service of 'assisted information' and 'general help' to clients from the District. The ten subject areas are Consumer, Money advice, Welfare Benefits, Employment, Housing, Family and personal matters, Taxes, Immigration and nationality, Health and Education. The funding will be used to partially fund the salaries of a Bureau Manager, Advice Services Manager, Advice Session Supervisor and admin assistance. The funding will also contribute to the general running costs of the Bureau. The 'assisted information' and 'general help' level of the service, is undertaken by volunteer advisers and the management, training, supervision and support for volunteers provides the infrastructure for this to be achieved. The management infrastructure in addition ensures the development of service delivery to meet the needs of the community, best use of resources and the sourcing of additional funding streams to provide a service to assist the alleviation of social exclusion. To ensure the quality of service, as measured by the Citizens Advice membership scheme, all aspects of the Bureau's operations are regularly audited.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£89,919 + 7,200 rent
	2009/2010	£92,617 + 7,200 rent
	2010/2011	£95,395 + 7,200 rent

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Lancaster Citizens Advice Bureau at £87,300 per annum and £7,200 per annum for rent and that the new SLA include the provision of a money advice case worker to be located in the Customer Contact Centre within Lancaster Town Hall.

Officer comments:-

Some discussion has taken place between the bureau and the Head of Revenues with a view to locating a money advice worker each week at Lancaster Town Hall who would deal with Council Tax arrears cases. It is suggested that this service be included as part of the terms of the next SLA within the existing funding.

The rental of 87 King Street is not due to end until 31st March 2009 and therefore the projected rental costs for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 are not known at this stage. The rent is therefore based on the current level of £7,200. Consideration should be given to whether the SLA should include provision to increase the grant in line with any increases in rent.

Lancaster Citizens Advice Bureau receives discretionary rate relief of £470.64.

2.6 Morecambe and Heysham Citizens Advice Bureau

Purpose of organisation:-

The Citizens Advice Service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities and seeks to value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination. The service aims to provide the advice people need for the problems they face and to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives. The main purpose of Morecambe and Heysham Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is to provide a general help, information and advice service, with assistance, advocacy and representation across a wide range of issues. The current areas of charitable activity are: the provision of a general advice and information service covering a wide range of issues and problems; the recruitment and training of volunteers in advice work, admin and reception work and the development of computer skills; The delivery of specialist casework in Debt, Housing, Welfare Benefits and Employment. We also have specifically funded projects which, working with partners, are dedicated to helping financially excluded people across Morecambe and the surrounding area. Amongst which is the provision of financial literacy training and awareness of scams.

In order to address the issues that affect people's lives the Bureau actively engages in social policy work through the recording of client problem data. The feedback of client experiences is essential to improve the policy and practice of local and national organisations and the profiling and understanding of local communities and local problems is a very useful resource for the planning of services. Identified national issues are sent to Citizens Advice central office, for use in lobbying Parliament, informing new legislation and amending existing laws. The vision of Morecambe and Heysham Citizens Advice Bureau is: 'Achieving Quality Support for All'. Each year the trustees produce a business plan that sets out what the CAB is going to achieve for the following year and how to achieve it. Staff and volunteers are also actively involved in the development of the business plan through the bureau's moving forward agenda in an extensive externally facilitated consultation process. Within this plan the aims are:

To provide quality accessible advice for clients within the aims, principles and policies of the CAB service.

To continue to provide and develop a service which meet the needs of the local community.

To enable opportunity, support and development for all volunteers, staff and Trustee Board members.

To ensure Morecambe and Heysham Citizens Advice Bureau is properly managed as a charitable company.

Proposed use of funding:-

Funding from Lancaster City Council enables the CAB to deliver the general advice and information service and to recruit and train volunteers to provide this service. Access to the Bureau is through an 'open door' service, an appointment system, telephone advice and written and E mail enquiries. Last year collectively, the CAB delivered advice to almost 6000 clients with over 17500 problems and dealt with £3.2 million of debt and brought in £800,000 of income to the local community.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£90,949
	2009/2010	£93,677
	2010/2011	£96,488

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Morecambe and Heysham Citizens Advice Bureau at £88,300 per annum and that the opportunity be explored

for a money advice case worker to be located in the Customer Contact Centre within Morecambe Town Hall as part of the SLA.

Officer comments:-

Morecambe and Heysham Citizens Advice Bureau receives discretionary rate relief of £1021.20.

2.7 North Lancashire Victim Support

Purpose of organisation:-

To provide emotional and practical support to all victims of crime. Victim Support are a free and confidential service that supports all victims of crime whether they have reported to the Police or not. Victim Support process criminal injuries compensation claims to victims.

Proposed use of funding:-

The funds will be used to provide support to victims of crime in the area. Trained volunteers provide emotional support and practical help to victims in their own home at outreach or whilst they give evidence in court. Victim Support contact victims via letter or telephone to assess their needs. Victim Support will provide a free and confidential service helping people to fill out criminal injuries compensation claims, process their claims and liaise with the authority. Victim Support will also assist people in taking their claims to the appeal stage. Victim Support will provide an outreach facility at Signposts in Morecambe, held every Wednesday and gives opportunity to see victims away from their home. It also provides the facility to see someone away from their home where Victim Support feel there could be a health and safety risk to volunteers. Victim Support hope to expand the service at Signposts. The funding will enable volunteers to continue visiting repeat victims with PCSOs as part of the Clean Sweep operations reassurance week and further develop work within the MAPS team. Victim Support are trained in emergency procedures and disaster plans and have played active roles in supporting witnesses in the Cackle picking tragedy and providing support to family members in the helicopter crash. Victim Support want to continue and develop this work by recruiting and training new volunteers. Victim Support would like to develop their role of Victim Liaison Officer with the Youth Offending Team to involve volunteers supporting victims as panel meetings and ensuring that the victim's needs are kept at the forefront. The funding that the Council provides, enables Victim Support to provide the volunteers needed in Lancaster, outreach facilities, the work carried out with MAPS, providing support in disasters both in court and the community and additional work in the Youth Offending Team.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£6,000
	2009/2010	£6,000
	2010/2011	£6,000

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to North Lancashire Victim Support at £5,000 per annum.

2.8 Preston Community Transport (Shopmobility)

Purpose of organisation:-

To alleviate social, economic, rural and cultural isolation and to support the transport needs of other local voluntary organisations.

Proposed use of funding:-

Preston Community Transport (PCT) currently provides shopmobility facilities in Lancaster and Morecambe and the mobile unit offers a range of manual and powered mobility equipment for hire to any disabled or elderly person who would benefit from improved mobility to gain access to the city centre. It is hoped that the Council will continue to provide support to allow the service to visit Lancaster and Morecambe on a weekly basis. The target of 500 clients using the service had been exceeded and from the period April –November 2007 the number of clients stood at 621. PCT are requesting £12,592 in order to maintain the present provision of shopmobility in Lancaster and Morecambe.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£12,600
	2009/2010	£12,900
	2010/2011	£13,100

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Preston Community Transport at £12,600 with inflation per annum.

2.9 Lune Valley Transport (Dial a bus)

Purpose of organisation:-

To provide door to door transport for persons not able to utilise normal public transport by virtue of their age/infirmary, location, disabilities or learning difficulties.

Proposed use of funding:-

To further extend our services to reach even more eligible persons both within our local and in some of the harder to reach regions. The money would be spent almost 50/50 on drivers wages and fuel as vehicle replacement and maintenance are for the greater part already budgeted for along with premises.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£10,000
	2009/2010	£10,000
	2010/2011	£10,000

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Lune Valley Transport at £3,300 per annum.

Officer comments:-

Since the Sub Panel met, further work has been undertaken in relation to concessionary fares and a report is scheduled for January Cabinet and there are concerns at this stage that the Council is in effect paying twice for the same service. The Officer recommendation is therefore to renew the existing SLA on an annual basis until further information is known on the position of funding for concessionary fares.

2.10 Age Concern Lancashire

Purpose of organisation:-

Age Concern will actively develop and promote wellbeing initiatives that will help all Lancashire's older people lead healthy and active lives. Age Concern will ensure that older people are fully informed so that they have choice and control to live their lives independently and as they choose. Age Concern will ensure older people have influence over and have the opportunity to be actively involved in decision making, policy development and service delivery and will be an effective partner that is able to influence strategic planning, promote good practice and challenge discrimination.

Proposed use of funding:-

The funding will help with salary, accommodation, office overheads and volunteer costs. Age Concern Lancashire currently have 63 volunteers and the value of their work last year was £28,136, based on each volunteer giving two hours time per week for 48 weeks of the year which given the investment of Lancaster City Council of £21,000 over 3 years, was more than matched in one year alone. Age Concern Lancashire will continue to provide care and assistance to elderly persons in North Lancashire, at a Rural Project based in Carnforth. Age Concern Lancashire will continue the provision of the Information Service, Visiting Service, Sitting Service, Shopping Service, Carers Group and Handyperson Service and will provide support to individual older persons in North Lancashire.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£7,500
	2009/2010	£7,725
	2010/2011	£7,957

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a further three year SLA to Age Concern Lancashire at £7,500 per annum.

2.11 Samaritans of Lancaster and District (new request)

Purpose of organisation:-

To provide immediate confidential support to anyone who is in crisis and to listen and be alongside people who are vulnerable, distressed or suicidal and to assist them by listening to find their own way through their problems. The Samaritans does this by responding to contacts by telephone, email and in person at 21 Sun Street. The Samaritans is a volunteer organisation, the contacts being taken by fully trained volunteers who give a minimum of 3 hours a week of their time. Besides responding to calls, the Samaritans have an active outreach programme to reach vulnerable people in prisons, hospitals, surgeries etc. The Samaritans plan is to extend and develop this outreach programme and to promote mental health awareness and knowledge of the service.

Proposed use of funding:-

To recruit, train and retain a large number of volunteers. At present the Samaritans have about 70 active volunteers but the large quality of its services and especially the outreach aspects would be greatly improved with more.

To be active in ensuring that callers, both current and potential are aware of what Samaritans has to offer. The aim is to increase public awareness that the Samaritans is there to support any individual at any time, the reality being that none of us know when or how a crisis will hit us. Alongside this there is also the need to actively target vulnerable groups such as adolescent males.

The Samaritans are therefore proposing a major publicity campaign to attract more volunteers and make the service better known to potential callers. The campaign is planned to involve a number of targeted strategies such as advertising on local buses and directed mail shots.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£3,000
	2009/2010	£3,000
	2010/2011	£3,000

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a new SLA to the Samaritans of Lancaster and District for three years at £1,500 per annum.

2.12 Thumbprint (new request)

Purpose of organisation:-

Thumbprint support people with learning disabilities to set up and run projects, enable people with learning disabilities to see themselves as equal members of society able to take control of their working lives, develop flexible systems of support so people with learning disabilities can understand the processes involved and maximise their involvement and control and involve people with learning disabilities within Thumbprint itself (e.g. as Trustees). Thumbprint aim to co-operate with other organisations with similar and related aims and focus on a person' abilities rather than his or her disability and work on practical projects with tangible and valued outcomes for those involved. Thumbprint support people with learning disabilities to take control of the projects that they are involved in and to plan and develop them.

Proposed use of funding:-

Thumbprint are seeking a full time co-ordinator which is essential to provide the central organisation and management from which further project support and development can grow. The person will enable the development of a range of projects, training and volunteering opportunities and bring together the necessary funds, resources and partnerships for these to happen. Thumbprint is the only organisation in the area that is actively working to develop community based alternatives for people with learning disabilities. Thumbprint believe that funding this core position is the key to Thumbprint being able to extend its work and to make the most of opportunities arising from both changes in day provision locally and from its move to more central and accessible premises at The Cornerstone.

Thumbprint would be open to the possibility of a joint Service Level Agreement with One Voice.

Amount of grant applied for:-	2008/2009	£21,840
	2009/2010	£22,500
	2010/2011	£23,172

Thumbprint are requesting full or part funding for this post which could be invaluable in helping them to gain further match funding from other sources.

Recommendation from the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel:-

That the Council offers a new three year SLA to Thumbprint at £4,000 per annum via a joint SLA with One Voice if possible.

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

There are a number of options:

- (1) To agree future funding and Service Level Agreements for 3 years on the same basis as currently for 2008 - 2011.
- (2) To agree funding and Service Level Agreements on a revised basis.
- (3) To discontinue funding and Service Level Agreements.

Option 1 above will have advantages in that renewing Service Level Agreements for a further 3 years will provide continuity, maintain good working relationships with local organisations and assist with the achievement of Council priorities. Granting a 3 year agreement provides certainty of funding to the voluntary organisations to enable them to plan the provision of services more effectively.

However there are disadvantages in that tying the Council into an arrangement for a 3 year period could exclude other interested parties and limit the Council's choice for future years and for this reason Members may wish to consider Option (2) and offer funding for a shorter period of time. The risk in this instance is that it is less likely that organisations would agree to the provisions of a Service Level Agreement without the certainty of future funding.

Members of the Budget and Performance Panel have spent some time interviewing representatives of each organisation and considering past performance on existing agreements. Recommendations include variations to the service level agreements and level of funding where appropriate.

Option 3 will provide savings in respect of any Service Level Agreements and associated funding which are discontinued.

Whilst there are risks associated with the commitment of funds to voluntary organisations, the signing of a Service Level Agreement and the revised and improved monitoring procedure introduced following the report of the Grants Task Group (approved by Cabinet on 27th July 2007) will provide some mitigation to the level of risk.

4.0 Officer comments

Budget and Performance Panel Members are encouraged to consider exactly what service they want from each organisation and if they want the services at all. Budget and Performance Panel Members are also asked to consider whether other organisations could provide similar services and be invited to bid for the funding.

It is also recommended that for each Service Level Agreement, there should be a responsible Service Head identified, who will monitor compliance with the SLA, and

ensure that the relevant organisation fulfils its responsibilities to the Council, with officers in Democratic Services providing the co-ordination.

5.0 Details of Consultation

The Budget and Performance Panel is responsible for the monitoring the operation of Service Level Agreements with voluntary organisations. During September and October 2007, Members of the Budget and Performance Panel have met with each of the organisations concerned together with relevant Council officers where possible. Although Cabinet's decision was that site visits should be undertaken to organisations with SLAs exceeding £10,000, it became clear that these visits were greatly valued by the organisations and the arrangement was therefore extended to all.

This year sees the final year of the 3 year SLA period and each SLA is subject to review with a view to establishing any changes required. In order to obtain a level of consistency in the information provided, improve the review process and take account of Cabinet's previous decisions following the report of the Grants Task Group, an application form has been devised asking organisations a number of key questions about their performance and the level of future funding including their view on how the service their organisations provides, contributes to the Council's corporate priorities.

Where possible, links have been made with the relevant Council Service or officer to consult on the SLAs, but matching SLAs to relevant Council Services/officer has proved difficult as there are no clear links between some of the SLAs and the Council's services. In these instances it has remained the responsibility of the co-ordinating officer in Democratic Services to carry out the necessary monitoring.

There remains further work required on the SLA in relation to the provision of equality and diversity advice and assistance within the district and Members are being recommended to give more detailed consideration to the issue before any agreement is confirmed. It may also be that the Council should ensure that other SLAs are similarly explored with existing and alternative service providers, in the future, in order to secure improved services and value for money.

Having considered the performance of these organisations, the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel have noted the funding requests by the organisations and made their recommendations for Budget and Performance Panel Members to take into account in their deliberations.

The recommended funding by the Sub Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel will amount to:

2008/09	£235,600
2009/10	£236,000
2010/11	£236,300

In 2008/09 this will be an increase of £3,500 over the projected budget, however in 2009/10 a budget saving of £400 will be generated and in 2010/11 a budget saving of £4,400 will be generated. Overall a budget of saving of £1,300 is projected over the three year period whilst providing an opportunity for the Samaritans and Thumbprint to receive funding.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The work of voluntary organisations funded by the Council supports many of the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no direct implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for grants to voluntary organisations is allocated to specific organisations with SLAs for any funding over £1,000. The total amount of funding allocated to the above voluntary organisations with SLAs amounted to £227,900 for 2007/08.

Indicative budgets for future years are currently £232,100 in 2008/09, £236,400 in 2009/10 and £240,700 for 2010/11. The recommended allocations by the Sub Panel would result in an increase of £3,500 in 2008/09, a reduction of £400 in 2009/10 and a reduction of £4,400 in 2010/11 and would need to be built in to the 2008/09 budget process. Please see Appendix A for an individual breakdown of these figures. If the Panel take account of Officer comments these could change.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and have no comments to add other than the contents of all new or amended SLA's should be agreed by Legal before implementation.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Existing Service Level Agreements with and monitoring information provided by organisations listed in the report.

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Ref:

	Organisation	2007/08 allocation	Proposed 2008/09	Projected budget 2008/09	Proposed 2009/10	Projected budget 2009/10	Proposed 2010/11	Projected budget 2010/11
1	Age Concern Lancashire	7,200	7,500	7,300	7,500	7,400	7,500	7,500
2	Lancaster CAB	87,300 + 7,200 rent	87,300 + 7,200	186,300 inc 7,200 rent	87,300 + 7,200	189,900 inc 7,200 rent	87,300 + 7,200	193,500 inc 7,200 rent
3	Morecambe & Heysham CAB	88,300	88,300		88,300		88,300	
4	One Voice	5,700	6,000	5,800	6,000	5,900	6,000	6,000
5	Victim Support	4,600	5,000	4,700	5,000	4,800	5,000	4,900
6	Lune Valley Transport (Dial a bus)	3,300	3,300	3,400	3,300	3,500	3,300	3,600
7	Preston Community Transport (Shopmobility)	11,600	12,600	11,800	12,900	12,000	13,100	12,200
8	Relate	6,400 rent	6,800	6,400	6,800	6,400	6,800	6,400
9	Preston & West Lancashire Racial Equality Council	2,300	2,000	2,300	2,000	2,300	2,000	2,300
10	Lancaster & District Twinning Society	4,000	4,100	4,100	4,200	4,200	4,300	4,300
11.	Samaritans		1,500		1,500		1,500	
12.	Thumbprint		4,000		4,000		4,000	
	TOTAL	£227,900	£235,600 Over budget by £3,500	£232,100	£236,000 Savings £400	£236,400	£236,300 Savings £4,400	£240,700