

BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Funding to non-housing voluntary organisations with Service Level Agreements

11th September 2007

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise members of the monitoring and renewal process for Service Level Agreements.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the decisions of Cabinet in July 2007 be noted.**
- 2. That the process for reviewing the current Service Level Agreements and considering any new applications be approved on the lines set out in the report.**
- 3. That a Sub-Panel of 3 Members of the Budget and Performance Panel be appointed to review the Service Level Agreements, with delegated authority to make recommendations to Cabinet for its 11th December 2007 meeting upon the existing Service Level Agreements and financial support to any new organisations.**

1.0 Introduction

The Budget and Performance Panel has the responsibility for the review and monitoring of Service Level Agreements with non-housing voluntary organisations. A report went to Cabinet at its meeting on 24th July 2007 upon the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Grants Task Group on the process for dealing with Service Level Agreements. Cabinet considered those recommendations and agreed:

- That Officers draw up a criteria based application form allowing for a process that is rolling and flexible and that includes the following principles: accountability, traceability, transparency, clarity, flexibility and justification with advice from Financial Services to reflect the principles of contract procedures and financial threshold.
- That when new applications are received for Service Level Agreements the relevant Cabinet Member is informed.
- That the Budget and Performance Panel be recommended to consider appointing a panel of three members to review and monitor non-housing organisations with Service Level Agreements. Undertaking site visits to organisations with SLAs exceeding £10,000 per annum.

- That Officers draw up a new application form, taking into account best practice to allow clearer monitoring with outcomes clearly linked to service delivery.
- That the Budget and Performance Panel present their findings to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Service Level Agreement as part of the Performance Review Team process.

2.0 Proposal

Any revised process needs to be implemented without delay to enable the existing Service Level Agreements which are due to end in March 2008 to be reviewed so that Cabinet can consider any proposed changes as part of the Council's overall budget process at its meeting in December 2007, ready for a final decision by Council on 27th February 2008. The existing Service Level Agreements due for review are:

Organisation	Funding 2007/08
Age Concern Lancashire	*7,200
Lancaster Citizens Advice Bureau	93,800
Morecambe Citizens Advice Bureau	88,300
One Voice formerly DISC	5,700
North Lancashire Victim Support	4,600
Lune Valley Transport	3,300
Preston Community Transport	11,600
Relate	6,400
Preston and West Lancashire Racial Equality Council	2,300
Lancaster and District Twinning Society.	4,000
TOTAL	227,200

** indicates those grants which meet the criteria for 50% contribution from the County Council.*

Two further organisations (Samaritans and Thumbprint) have also indicated they would like to explore the opportunity to receive financial support from the Council.

Therefore it is suggested that the Panel appoints 3 Members as a Sub-Panel of the Budget and Performance Panel to review the Service Level Agreements. It is also suggested in view of timescales, that authority be delegated to the Sub-Panel to make recommendations to Cabinet for its 11th December 2007 meeting on whether to renew, renew with amendments or terminate the Service Level Agreements. Alongside that, the Sub-Panel will also need to make recommendations on whether to offer financial support to these new organisations within that same budget process.

Members of the Budget and Performance Panel have already been contacted to take part in preliminary meetings/site visits with all of these organisations and some have already been arranged. Although the Cabinet report only suggests site visits for organisations receiving over £10,000, it is clear that organisations are keen for the Council to visit and it has been suggested that at least one officer and Member visit rather than inviting organisations to the Budget and Performance Panel as in the past. An application form and questionnaire will be developed for use at the meetings. These and any extra information from the meetings will be used to provide evidence for the Sub-Panel to consider in developing any recommendations to Cabinet.

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.

A total of £223,600 is included in the budget for 2007/08 for those organisations listed in paragraph 2. (Two further SLA's totalling £23,100 for CVS and the Rainbow Centre have been separately negotiated jointly with the County Council which do not expire in 2008.)

Any proposal to increase or reduce the total budget commitment will have to be considered alongside competing priorities as part of the overall budget process for 2008/09 and beyond.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

All Service Level Agreements are to be approved by Legal Services.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Existing Service Level Agreements

Contact Officer: Suzanne Smith

Telephone: 01524 582074

E-mail: smsmith@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: