



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: CROSS- CUTTING

Date of Meeting: 25th September 2006

Public

Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan:

No

Inside Policy Framework

Title: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - IMPROVEMENT REVIEW

Report of: Director of Community Services

Report reference: CS 51/06

Summary:

This report sets out the scope of the initial Improvement Review being undertaken by the Council.

Recommendations:

It is RECOMMENDED that the Executive consider and approve the scope for the Improvement Review of Community Development and refer this to Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Contact Officer: Michael Battersby

Ext: 7325

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: Report RB 4/06 (Executive 31/7/06)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 At its meeting on 31 July 2006 the Executive considered Report RB 4/06 related to the Audit Commission Use of Resources. One aspect of this was 'value for money' and within the report was a chart showing expenditure on service areas compared with Audit Commission Nearest Neighbour Comments. This information is being updated and refined to enable the Senior Management Team to review service areas of comparatively high expenditure.
- 1.2 A programme of Improvement Reviews (IR) is being developed and an initial IR is being proposed for Community Development. A copy of the Scoping Report is included as Appendix 1 which sets out details of the existing service and the context and issues to be addressed within the IR.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Consultation to Date - N/A.
- 2.2 Consultation proposed - The review will consult with a range of partners, Beacon and Excellent Authorities and the community generally.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is RECOMMENDED that the Executive consider and approve the scope for the Improvement Review of Community Development and refer this to Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

An important aspect of the Council's performance is to review services and costs to ensure these provide value for money and contribute to corporate priorities.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – To be managed within existing resources. Some external challenge may need to be commissioned.
- Financial – N/A
- Legal – N/A

- Corporate – This initial review is an important aspect of the Use of Resources and the scope has been agreed at SMT
- Risk Management – Service changes which may evolve from this review could have a reputational impact for the Council
- Equality Issues – Will be addressed within the Review
- Environmental – Will be addressed within the Review
- Crime and Disorder – Will be addressed within the Review
- Impact on Customers – Will be addressed within the Review

SCOPING REPORT**1.0 Need for a Review**

- 1.1 There are probably two main reasons for a review of the Community Development service within the Council. One is that the package of services undertaken has evolved in recent years and in view for changing community demands and pressures it is important to validate if the services we currently provide meets these needs across all communities. Secondly as part of the Councils value for money process, approved by the Executive (report RB 4/06) this is an area of high expenditure within the Council. As such it is an obvious area for an initial Improvement Review within the Council.
- 1.2 A recent examination on the Use of Resources – Value for Money identified this service (together with Economic Development) as a high spending area when compared with other Authorities at £16.41 head of population (2005/6). It should be recognised that with such a diverse service direct comparison is difficult.
- 1.3 The service is non-statutory and therefore the Council has full discretion on expenditure levels which equate to approx. £1.77m/year. This equates to approx. 11% of the Council's annual net revenue budget.
- 1.4 The effectiveness and value of the service is difficult to measure and comparison with other Authorities is more so, as the level of service provided by the Council is more like that of a Unitary Authority than equivalent District Councils.
- 1.5 The services provided by the current function are wide and diverse and many of these are highly regarded by the community. Good practice is recognised in areas such as the award recently received by Sure Start, work with young people and the highly popular Fireshow. For the relatively high level of expenditure however there are only a few areas which contributes to the two corporate priorities, mainly to Learning City.
- 1.6 The recent organisational restructure and the grouping of services i.e. Area Teams, Sport & Recreation within the Community Services Directorate provide an ideal opportunity to provide a more holistic approach to the Council's interface with the community.

2.0 Existing Service

- 2.1 The Community Development team comprises services within the aim of enabling, supporting, empowering and encouraging groups and individuals to take an active interest in the affairs of the community in which they live. A diverse range of services are provided by the team and it must be emphasised that other services within the Council also engage with the community in different ways.
- 2.2 The net expenditure for these services in 2005/6 is £1.77m of which £1.17m are direct costs and £0.604m are indirect costs. The team comprises approx. 19 full time equivalent posts and the net salary cost is £493,000 approx. A breakdown of the costs are as follows:-

BUDGET COSTS (2005/6 Original budgets)

Community Support

Direct:

| | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Employee costs | 258,200 | | |
| Premises related | 6,600 | | |
| Transport | 20,100 | | |
| Supplies & services | 268,400 | | |
| Third party | 0 | | |
| Income (external funding) | 0 | <u>553,300</u> | |
| <u>Indirect:</u> | | | |
| Training recharges | 800 | | |
| Insurance | 5,800 | | |
| Building repairs | 2,700 | | |
| Rent & rates | 31,900 | | |
| Support services | 81,190 | | |
| Business unit admin | 90,100 | <u>212,490</u> | <u>765,790</u> |
| Community Centres | | | |
| <u>Direct:</u> | | | |
| Employee costs | 1,800 | | |
| Premises related | 7,800 | | |
| Energy | 0 | | |
| Supplies & services (<i>inc grants to Centres</i>) | 350,500 | | |
| Income | -13,700 | 346,400 | |
| <u>Indirect:</u> | | | |
| Training recharges | 0 | | |
| Insurance | 13,100 | | |
| Building repairs | 98,600 | | |
| Rent & rates | 0 | | |
| Support services | 35,200 | | |
| Business unit admin | 86,400 | | |
| Capital Charges | 75,000 | 308,300 | <u>654,700</u> |
| Play & Young People | | | |
| <u>Direct:</u> | | | |
| Employee costs | 141,000 | | |
| Transport | 6,000 | | |
| Supplies & services | 8,600 | | |
| Income | 0 | 155,600 | |
| <u>Indirect:</u> | | | |
| Training recharges | 0 | | |
| Insurance | 2,400 | | |
| Support services | 0 | | |
| Business unit admin | 39,700 | 42,100 | <u>197,700</u> |
| Advice & Advocacy | | | |
| <u>Direct:</u> | | | |
| Employee costs | 92,400 | | |
| Premises related | 4,700 | | |
| Energy | 1,800 | | |
| Transport | 2,600 | | |
| Supplies & services | 12,500 | | |
| Third party | 100 | 114,100 | |
| <u>Indirect:</u> | | | |
| Training recharges | 100 | | |
| Insurance | 1,400 | | |
| Building repairs | 1,500 | | |
| Rent & rates | 7,000 | | |
| Support services | 8,570 | | |
| Business unit admin | 22,100 | | |
| Income | 0 | 40,670 | <u>154,770</u> |
| | | | <u>£1,772,960</u> |

2.3 The services are integrated and co-ordinated and many are developed and delivered in partnership. There are a number of component parts:-

- **Community Support**

- provides special events, i.e Upperby Gala, Fireshow, pop2thepark, Spring Show, Festival of Nations, etc
- grants to local organisations, which includes the Citizens Advice Bureau, Law Centre, Anchorage Centre etc
- Community education/training courses
- Supports a range of community initiatives and projects with other partners
- Acts as Lead Body and host employing agency for the Sure Start Carlisle South programme
- Provides the delivery area for the Council's Equality & Diversity Strategy

- **Community Centres**

- provides mainly arms length support and advice to community centres
- provides grants to some community centres (70% of budget ring fenced for staff costs)
- the Council has retained maintenance responsibility for the assets and the budget includes building repairs and capital charges

- **Children and Young People**

- delivers a range of initiatives including the holiday play scheme
- develops activity and play opportunities targeted at children and young people
- provides advice and training opportunities to individuals and independent youth groups
- provides a mobile resource and outreach service targeted at children and young people where there is limited alternative provision
- undertook a significant role in recent Carlisle Renaissance consultation
- Town Twinning youth exchange

- **Advice Services**

- provides a Free, confidential Benefits advice service
- provides grant aid to Community Law Centre, CAB and CVS through a service agreement
- provides strategic lead for the provision of advice services in Carlisle and Cumbria Legal Services Partnership

2.4 There are a few tangible outcome measures of performance currently in place. Surveys generally indicate a high level of satisfaction in events and participation levels only effectively measure inputs. The use and grant awards achieved by the BAC are measured and are very positive.

3.0 Scope of the Review

3.1 As stated earlier there are key drivers which shape the scope of the review. The need to ensure that the services provided best meet the needs of the community in the most effective and efficient manner needs to be assessed. Incorporated within this is the need for equality to ensure that the needs of all specific community groups are understood and define the services provided. An important aspect must also be cost and the budget pressures facing the Council as it strives to re-direct resources to the corporate priorities. The potential to delivery savings in each area must be rigorously explored.

3.2 The questions which need to be addressed are:-

- 3.2.1 Does the Council have a clear vision of what it wants to achieve shaped by the National agenda to develop and engage the community and a strategy to achieve this which contributes to corporate priorities?
- 3.2.2 There are a range of bodies and agencies involved within the community. What do others provide and are Council resources being directed to the right areas? Is there any overlap or gaps and is there effective partnership working?
- 3.2.3 A separate piece of work is underway with the County Council to review the role of Neighbourhood Forums. Once progressed how can existing services be reconfigured to strengthen the City Council's contribution to this role?
- 3.2.4 There is increasing pressure for the Council to contribute funding to the operation and development of Community Centres. Should this continue and is the current basis of funding equitable?
- 3.2.5 How can performance in these services be measured and what are the benchmarks for excellence?
- 3.2.6 Whilst there is already co-ordination of activities, can efficiencies be gained by closer integration of the Play and Young Peoples team and the Sports & Recreation team?
- 3.2.7 What are the benefits of the Town Twinning Youth exchange and do these justify the expenditure?
- 3.2.8 Past reviews of the Benefits Advice Centre have produced improvements and there is considered to be little scope for further efficiencies if the Council wishes to continue the service. Would the policy/strategy role be better integrated within Economic Development or Policy & Strategy?
- 3.2.9 How much do Council events contribute to corporate priorities and how are they best delivered, including those not currently delivered by the Community Development team?
- 3.2.10 What is the Council's ongoing role in Sure Start?
- 3.2.11 Could income be generated by some of the services which are provided?

4.0 Format of the Review

4.1 It is proposed to base the review on Best Value principles i.e. Challenge, Compare, Consult and Compete and to adopt a simplified PRINCE 2 methodology. The aim of the review is in many respects set out in section 2 which defines the need for the review but more importantly the scope needs to address the key issues set out in section 3.

4.2 The Project Review Team will comprise:-

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Project Sponsor - | Director of Community Services |
| Senior Supplier - | Head of Community & Culture |
| Senior User - | Head of Policy & Strategy |
| Quality Assurance - | Internal Audit/Peter Mason |

There will be the need for significant input into the various work packages primarily from the Community Development team and Policy & Strategy/Finance.

- 4.3 The challenge element of the review will focus on the role the Council undertakes and wishes to have in community development, how this can be achieved and the costs which will be associated with this role compared to the benefits. The functions must be more closely aligned to corporate priorities. At this stage it is considered that some external expertise is likely to be required to support this aspect.
- 4.4 Contact will be made with Excellent/Beacon Authorities to ascertain and assess the benefits of best practice which could be applied in Carlisle. Similarly bodies such as the Association of Public service Excellence (APSE) will be engaged to develop effective performance measures wherever possible.
- 4.5 Consultation will take place with a number of groups:-
 - Users of the services will be engaged in reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the current services
 - Focus groups, possibly selected from the Citizens Panel, will be held to obtain views of users and non-users of the services and to identify community needs
 - Partners who provide similar services within the community
- 4.6 Once the scope has been endorsed the Project Team will develop a detailed programme of work. At this stage it is considered that the review will take 6-9 months.
- 4.7 Subject to approval of the scope by Executive this will be referred to Community O/S Committee who will be asked to include this Improvement Review in their work programme to provide a 'challenge' and drive forward the review. The outcomes would be presented back to Executive.
- 4.8 As this is the first of what will be a programme of Improvement Reviews then the learning will be fed back to shape future reviews.

M BATTERSBY
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES