



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH JULY 2011

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY COHESION FUND 2010-11

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a summary of projects supported by the Community Cohesion Fund in 2010-11 and highlight the key issues relating to the management and administration of the Fund.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Welsh Government (WG) allocated a total of £117,980 to Caerphilly County Borough in June 2010, to be awarded to projects focusing on strategic cohesion themes, as described in the WG guidance (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 In all, 12 projects were supported, with a total value of £83,814. With 10% of this amount claimed for management and administration. The table at Appendix 2 gives a brief summary and spend for each project.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Community Cohesion Fund addresses issues that impact on a range of strategic priorities, as set out in the Community Strategy and “People, Businesses, Places”, the Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan. A Caerphilly Community Cohesion Action Plan has also been developed, which links to key activities undertaken by all members of the Community Cohesion Forum (chaired by Supt. Jon Burley) and is monitored by that Forum. In late 2009, WG launched ‘Getting On Together – A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales’, which sets out the priorities for cohesion across Wales.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 In June 2010, WG announced the allocations of Community Cohesion Funding for each local authority area across Wales and Caerphilly CBC was allocated £117,980. WG guidance indicated that a strategic approach should be adopted to tackle locally identified issues, a minimum of 50% of the funding must be spent in Communities First areas and only revenue projects could be supported.
- 4.2 With this in mind, a Commissioning Subgroup of the Caerphilly Community Cohesion Forum was established to consider project proposals and ideas and this met in early September 2010. The Subgroup submitted a list of recommended projects for the Forum to consider, which were subsequently endorsed at a meeting on 15 September.

- 4.3 These project proposals were then shared with local partnerships, at a meeting of the Joint Chairs on 30 September. They were submitted to WG for final approval during early October and decisions received during that month (two capital funding proposals were refused, as this is a revenue only grant, but the remainder were approved). One project was not pursued, but those remaining would require almost the full amount of allocated funding.
- 4.4 WG advised that all projects should comply with local procurement rules, so the Council's Procurement procedures were adhered to in all cases. This resulted in three projects (each with a value of over £10,000) being offered to a range of organisations on a competitive tendering process:
- **Support for Victims of Hate Crime** - £24,000 allocated and offered as a project on the Plaza system (Procurement's online system by which tenders are invited) in January 2011. Unfortunately, no proposals were received, so the process was repeated. Again, no proposals were forthcoming, so it was decided that the project should not be pursued.
 - **Upper Rhymney Valley Study** – a £14,900 project, which was put onto Plaza in early February 2011 and subsequently awarded to Opinion Research Services (ORS) Ltd. Given the delay, the project was extended to be concluded by the end of July 2011. As a result, £4,250 was claimed in 2010-11, with the remainder to be claimed in 2011-12 (£9,650).
 - **Research into Hate Crimes in Schools** – a £20,000 project, which also appeared on the Plaza system in February and was also awarded to ORS Ltd. As with the URV Study, the project has been extended to be finished in the summer of 2011. £10,000 was claimed in 2010-11, with the remaining £10,000 reserved from the 2011-12 budget.
- 4.5 During February 2011, it became clear that the impact of the loss of the Hate Crime project and the reduction of spend in 2010-11 for the URV Study and Schools Research projects along with a forecast reduced spend for some of the other projects would result in a significant underspend compared to the total allocation. This gave an opportunity for the development of a number of additional projects to maximise the benefits of the allocated amount. In order to achieve this, the priorities identified in Communities First Mapping Reports (completed in 2009-10) were considered. As a result, the Community Focused Schools, Barnardo's, Valrec, Trading Standards and Scott Associates projects were developed and subsequently approved.
- 4.6 With the exception of the two ongoing projects, all projects have now been completed and final reports have been requested (which can be circulated to members in due course when all have been received). The final spend of £92,195 leaves a net underspend of £25,785, which has not been claimed from WG. In addition, the late start for the URV Study and Schools Research projects has reduced the sum available for projects in 2011-12 from £117,757 to £98,107.

5. PROGRESS

- 5.1 The management and administration of the Community Cohesion Fund has now been passed to the Community Safety Team (where it sits in most local authorities) and the process has changed to incorporate lessons learned from 2010-11. During April and May, Antony Bolter visited most of the Community Partnerships to share information regarding priorities for the Fund (attached as Appendix 3) and the emerging process for submitting applications. Regular ongoing communication will be maintained with the Community Partnerships to keep them informed of developments.
- 5.2 The application process now takes the form of an open bidding round, with applications submitted by 1 June 2011. Applications have been considered by a Caerphilly Community Cohesion Forum panel and successful proposals are to be forwarded to the Welsh Government for final approval, as required by the "Terms and Conditions" of grant.

- 5.3 A ceiling of £10,000 has been set for each project and, under the Council's Procurement rules, there will not be a requirement to seek tenders, which should also speed up the process.
- 5.4 The procedures now in place will ensure that a longer operational period is now available for projects – they can hopefully start by early July. This should ensure that the full allocation is spent on projects in the County Borough during the current year. It should be noted that this will be the final year of Community Cohesion Funding and all projects must be completed by 31 March 2012.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The report has been amended to accommodate all comments made during consultations.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That members note the summary contained in this report along with the implementation of improvements to the process and efforts to engage with Community Partnerships.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To ensure members are informed with regard to the outputs from the Community Cohesion Fund and the relevant procedures applied.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 WG Guidance on Community Cohesion Fund 2010-11
Appendix 2 Summary table for 2010-11 Projects
Appendix 3 List of priorities for Community Cohesion Fund in 2011-12