



Report of the East Leeds Acting Area Manager

Meeting of: East (Outer) Area Committee

Date: 12th December 2006

Subject: Revision to Area Committee Small Grants Scheme (Wellbeing Budget)

Electoral Wards Affected:

ALL OUTER EAST WARDS

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report proposes revision to eligibility rules and guidance notes for the Area Committee's Small Grants Scheme operated from its Wellbeing (revenue) Budget. It is presented in response to concerns expressed by Members that the purpose of the scheme was not clear enough and therefore it encouraged applications for activities not delivering actions relevant to the Area Committees priorities or from organisations who should either be charging or funding the activity from elsewhere.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present for approval revised eligibility rules and guidance notes for the Area Committee's Small Grants Scheme operated from its Wellbeing (revenue) Budget.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The Area Committee operates a Small Grants from its Wellbeing (revenue) Budget.

- 2.2 The amount set aside as a "pot" for the Scheme is agreed each year as part of the annual spending plans approved for the Wellbeing Budget.
- 2.3 £20,000 was set aside for the 2006/07 financial year – allowing for £5,000 per ward.
- 2.4 Guidance notes have been produced for potential applicants, which can be downloaded from the Council's website or sent on request from the Area management offices.
- 2.5 However, members have recently expressed concern at how broad the eligibility criteria appears to be for applications. Particular concerns include:
- Inconsistency on the interpretation of "running costs"
 - Too many repeat applications from organisations, seemingly for the same activity
 - Applications from organisations who should have access to more appropriate budgets
 - Applications for activities which it is considered would normally be paid for by contributions by the users
 - Funding of activities not clearly linked to the agreed priorities of the Area Committee
 - Uncertainty about the process when an application is not supported by all Members
- 2.6 As well as causing concern that the Scheme was not always working in the way it was intended to, Members were equally worried that applicants' expectations and time may be unfairly raised and wasted.

3.0 REVISED ELIGIBILITY AND GUIDANCE

- 3.1 To address the concerns in section 2.5 and 2.6, revised *Guidance Notes for Applicants* are attached (appendix A) for the Area Committee's approval.
- 3.2 Members will note that the Guidance Notes include clear notes and examples of what can and can not be considered under the Scheme.
- 3.3 The notes include instructions that it must be clear what Area Committee priority the project/activity the funds are being applied for will address.
- 3.4 The notes also make clearer that applicants are strongly advised to seek a view from the Area Management offices on the eligibility of their proposal before completing a full application form.
- 3.5 Finally it is made clear in the guidance notes that applicants **MUST** not only provide receipts for any expenditure but also provide a brief written report on the activity/project for Area Committee. This will also be restated in a funding agreement which will be sent out to every successful application for them to sign and return.
- 3.6 These "evaluation" reports will be appended to future Wellbeing update reports at Area Committee, available for use at local Forums meetings, posted on the Outer East webpages and selected examples used in the About Leeds area page to help publicise the grant scheme.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the content of the report and approve the revised Eligibility and Guidance Notes for the Small Grants Scheme as set out in appendix A.
- 4.2 The Area Committee is asked to confirm delegation for the approval of Small Grants to the Area Manager where following consultation with Members there are no outstanding queries or objections; and that where there remain objections the application is referred to the next Area Committee meeting for consideration. Any applications received that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be automatically rejected (with the Area Manager's authority) and local ward members informed for information.