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**REPORT TO:** Community Services

**AGENDA ITEM:** 12

**DATE OF MEETING:** 29/8/2002

**CATEGORY:**  
**DELEGATED**

**REPORT FROM:** SANDRA WHILES

**OPEN**

**MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:** M Roseburgh  
5774

**DOC:**

**SUBJECT:** Community Partnerships Scheme

**REF:**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED:** All

**TERMS OF REFERENCE:** CS07

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 Members agree the revised guidance and application procedures for a Community Partnerships Scheme.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To remind Members of the background to the Community Partnerships Scheme and seek agreement for the current proposals for the new scheme.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 The original Community Partnership Scheme operated over a three year period from 1997-2000 supported by the Government's Capital Challenge Pilot Scheme. The scheme was successful in progressing both new and existing capital projects brought forward by community groups and the Council. The scheme exceeded the targets set by government both in relation to leverage of funds into the district and number of projects supported.
- 3.2 During this period a unit of two full-time posts directly managed the scheme, which also benefited from additional officer support equivalent to a two further posts. Consequently in addition to grant funding the scheme was able to offer community development support and funding advice to projects. Furthermore the Council was able to offer technical support such as architectural and engineering services.
- 3.3 Since the original scheme finished the Council has suffered a financial crisis and subsequent staff reduction as well as undertaking a reprioritisation and refocusing exercise.
- 3.4 The impact of this is that no scheme ran for two years and that the human resources available to manage and support a revamped scheme are considerably less. The management of the scheme will be undertaken by the Partnership Development officer alone in conjunction with the other responsibilities of the post. The Council is unable to offer direct technical support and only strictly limited community development support and funding advice.

- 3.5 The new scheme approved as a result of a service development proposal has £50,000 available which needs to be awarded before March 31<sup>st</sup> as approval has only currently been given for a one off time limited period.
- 3.6 It is proposed that due to the success of the previous scheme and the time constraints of allocating the grants before the year end that the new scheme largely adopts the same format as the previous scheme save for amendments necessitated by the aforementioned changed circumstances.
- 3.7 The proposed amended guidance for applicants and application form are attached as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.
- 3.8 The key elements of the scheme remain the same. The guiding principles are that the scheme should provide support for community groups in South Derbyshire, assist in attracting external funds to South Derbyshire and encourage self-help and joint working arrangements. Projects are eligible under a variety of headings so long as they are of benefit to communities in South Derbyshire.
- 3.9 The key difference to the original scheme is that it will not support projects that are Council Officer led and part of the Council's Capital Programme. It will however support community led projects where the Council is a key partner.
- 3.10 On a more practical level the grants are to support capital and not revenue costs, will normally be between 5% and 25% of total project cost and with a minimum award of £1,000 and a maximum of £25,000. Grants will also be available for professional fees such as feasibility studies.
- 3.11 Applications will be judged on a number of criteria highlighted in the Guidance notes including links with corporate priorities, sustainability, value of other contributions, value for money, community involvement, risk and commitment to equal opportunities. In addition all applicants will need to have a constitution or set of rules, a bank account with at least two signatories and either recently approved accounts or a business plan. The assessment process and criteria is incorporated into the Guidance notes for applicants as an appendix.
- 3.12 Once an application has been processed and approved then a number of conditions are in force including a period of validity, payment and monitoring procedures, again as detailed in the attached Guidance Notes.
- 3.13 Due to the requirement to allocate all expenditure before March 31<sup>st</sup> 2003 it is proposed to process applications on a first come, first served basis following initial publicity about the scheme. It is anticipated that this will effectively mean a 2 round bidding process.
- 3.14 It is envisaged that direct marketing of the scheme to Community Groups will follow consultation with South Derbyshire CVS, officers working within the authority who have contact with community groups and the Council's Public Relations Officer.
- 3.15 At present the scheme has only been reinstated for the current year. However it is proposed that the scheme is reviewed and evaluated on completion to inform improve management of any future scheme and future service development.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 Members have approved the £50,000 expenditure for the scheme.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

5.1 The scheme contributes to a number of the Council's key aims including safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environment, promoting the health and welfare of all sections of the community, managing resources efficiently and effectively and supporting the development of the National Forest.

#### **6.0 Community Implications**

6.1 The scheme will maximise funding available for community investment by providing both direct funding and enabling leverage from other funding sources. It will also reopen direct lines of communication with the community sector that have been lost since the demise of the former Community Partnership Scheme.

6.2 At the same time it needs to be acknowledged that the gap between schemes, the difference between schemes and the short-term nature of this scheme may cause problems for the community and voluntary sector that will need to be managed. In particular there may be confusion and raised expectations about ongoing or longer term financial and other support to the community from the Council. Guidance, publicity and all other forms of communication will need to clarify the situation.

#### **7.0 Conclusions**

7.1 The reintroduction of a Community Partnerships Scheme represents an ideal opportunity for the District Council to support a variety of community partners in improving the quality of life for local residents. It will also enable the community partners to lever in additional external funding to the district.

#### **8.0 Background Papers**

8.1 None.

