REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	9TH DECEMBER 2015	CATEGORY:
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY & PLANNING SERVICES	DELEGATED OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	IAN HEY(Ext 8741) COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP OFFICER	DOC:
SUBJECT:	COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIP SCHEME	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: 6.03

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That members recognise that the Community Partnership Scheme continues to address aims and objectives of the Council through both inward investment and support of non-profit organisations in the District. Further to this that members support a review of the grant application process and associated paperwork, to be undertaken in conjunction with South Derbyshire CVS. The review to make recommendations about how the process can be made more accessible for non-profit groups working to support residents of South Derbyshire.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To provide members with information about the Community Partnership Scheme and identify the potential to review the grant application process in conjunction with South Derbyshire CVS, recognising that SD CVS are a voluntary sector infrastructure body that work to support the sector within the District.

3.0 Executive Summary

3.1 The Community Partnerships Scheme operates according to processes and procedures as previously agreed by the Housing and Community Services Committee.
3.2 The scheme has been targeted at supporting the aims and objectives of the Council by:
  3.2.1 Supporting non-profit organisations that are looking to develop larger capital projects. (For the purposes of the scheme larger has been identified as projects with a value greater than £4,000.)
  3.2.2 To attract inward investment into South Derbyshire in the form of grant funding to match the Council's investment.
3.3 Additionally the Community Partnership Scheme offers support for smaller and revenue based projects through grant research, mentoring and skills development via the Community Partnership Officer.

3.4 It is recommended that the application process is reviewed in conjunction with the South Derbyshire CVS to ensure that it is robust enough to secure sufficient information to make a grant decision while being as accessible as possible.

4.0 Detail

4.1 The Community Partnership Scheme was established to deliver two separate and distinct objectives to support the work of the Council.
4.1.1 To provide funding advice and support for non-profit organisations developing projects that benefit residents of South Derbyshire.
4.1.2 To attract inward investment to support larger capital projects. This has been achieved by providing grants that act as matched funding.

4.2 A review of funding still offered by other Local Authorities makes it clear that a key criterion for each of them is the achievement of the Authority's own core objectives. This continues to be a principle aim of the Community Partnership Scheme.

4.3 For the purposes of the scheme "larger project" has been identified as a project with a value greater than £4,000. This figure has been identified as there are a number of smaller grant funders that have the capacity to support projects within South Derbyshire. Examples of this would include the range of grants offered via Foundation Derbyshire and the East Midlands Airport Community Fund. The Lottery small grants programme, Awards for All, has also been an active supporter of smaller revenue and capital projects within the District.

4.4 The Community Partnership Scheme offers capital grants of up to £25,000 to projects brought forward from the voluntary and community sector. Larger capital projects often find it difficult to secure initial funding to help attract other funders. This has been a key role for this scheme, especially as the Big Lottery now makes very few capital grants in support of larger projects and their criteria exclude most of the District.

4.5 The actual overall value of the scheme has varied. £300,000 was allocated to the scheme to enable grants to be made in support of applications received during 2014/15 and 2015/16. During this period a total of 35 grants have been awarded against projects with a value of £900,000. Once all of these projects are delivered it will achieve an inward investment ration of 2:1.

4.6 A process map at annex a identifies how support is offered via the Community Partnership Scheme.

4.7 Eligible groups are invited to apply for capital funding assistance. This is undertaken via an application form (annex b), supported by guidance notes (annex c). Organisations are also actively encouraged to access time from the Community Partnership Officer who will support the whole application process.

4.8 Organisations that are developing smaller or revenue based projects are supported by the Community Partnership Scheme through the intervention of the Community Partnership Officer who is able to provide advice and support through grant research, mentoring and skills development.

4.9 Applications for funding are assessed by a panel comprising five Councillors, with advice from the Community Partnership Officer. The assessment is undertaken

using a scoring framework (annex d). This framework is also made available to applying groups via the Council web site or from the Community Partnership Officer so that they can gain a more informed understanding of how the application will be assessed.

4.10 The specific criteria for the capital grant scheme have been developed taking into account:

- The need to address Council aims and objectives.
- Availability of alternative sources of funding. Specifically the focus on revenue funding by the Big Lottery and the availability of a number of grant programmes that target smaller projects such as Foundation Derbyshire grant streams, the East Midlands Airport Community Fund and the lottery Awards for All programme.
- The difficulty for non-profit organisations to secure initial grant monies to act as matched funding to attract additional grants for larger capital projects.
- The requirement to secure sufficient information for the panel to make an informed decision.

4.11 When the Community Partnership Grant scheme was initiated it provided a maximum of 25% of the total project value. This ensured minimum inward investment of 75% of the project value. Recognising the changing funding environment the scheme rules were amended in 2014/15 to allow applications for up to 50% of project value.

4.12 The value of projects undertaken within the Voluntary Sector was identified within the Funded Voluntary Organisations review (Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2012-13).

4.13 Following the grant round in 2014-15 Cllr Peter Smith undertook a review of the grant process with recipient groups in the Repton Ward. "Most felt that the help, support and advice which was available in both the completing of the application process and the follow-up following the submission extremely helpful." It was recognised that one group found the process difficult. The full report can be found at annex e.

4.14 Overall feedback about the scheme and support available is positive, however, there is now an opportunity to review the assessment process to ensure that it continues to be as accessible as possible. It is proposed that a review of the process and associated literature is undertaken with the support of South Derbyshire CVS. South Derbyshire CVS exists to support the development of the Voluntary Sector and has been a principle partner of the Council to support consultation with the sector and hard to reach groups.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1.1 Funding already identified and allocated will be distributed to the Voluntary Sector.

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 Grants will support corporate priorities.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 Grants will support corporate priorities.

9.0 **Background Papers**

9.1 Annex a - Community Partnership process map
9.2 Annex b - Community Partnership Grant - Application Form
9.3 Annex c - Community Partnership Grant - Guidance Notes
9.4 Annex d - CPS Assessment Criteria
9.5 Annex e – Feedback on grant application process.