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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 8</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> May 2010</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED/ RECOMMENDED OPEN</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>CHRIS SMITH (5924)</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Review of Safer Neighbourhoods Funding Stream</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 Members to accept the review and to adopt the recommended amendments to the Safer Neighbourhoods funding stream and the associated application form and guidance paper.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To inform members of the outcomes of the review and the recommended amendments to the Safer Neighbourhoods funding stream and associated paperwork.
- 2.2 To make improvements to the funding stream process so its easily accessible to community groups, remains in line with District Council Audit processes and remains simple to administer.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 The crime and disorder act 2006 review extended the powers of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees to encompass the work of Community Safety Partnerships. After a discussion at the previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting it was agreed that the Committee would assist in reviewing the administration of the Safer Neighbourhoods grant process and the associated Application form and guidance papers.
- 3.2 Although the Safer Neighbourhoods funding grant has been a popular and successful community-funding stream, which has benefited local communities through reducing anti social behaviour and fear of crime, the Partnership team were of the opinion that there were some areas of the process that could be improved and that after 3 years it was time for the process to be reviewed.

3.3 The areas that the Partnership team recognised could be improved were:

- Despite the funding stream running from April to March each year, many 'last minute' applications come in after Christmas to the 'big pot' when the remaining unspent money from all areas is available to projects from any areas to bid into.
- Certain Safer Neighbourhood Areas submit far more applications for projects than others.
- The absence of Parish Councils in the urban core impacts on the number of applications submitted in these areas.
- The quality of applications can be poor and submitted at short notice.
- Some projects do not deliver projects on time and due to the grants being paid in advance they can have the money in their accounts for long periods of time before the project is delivered.
- On occasions there is a difficulty in obtaining Invoices/ evidence of spend.
- The quality of evaluations received can be poor.

3.2 An initial scoping document was produced by the Safer Communities Manager and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010 where it was discussed.

3.3 The Scrutiny Committee agreed to assist in carrying out the review and It was agreed that the areas that the review should cover were as follows:

- Deadlines for submitting applications
- Maximum amount of funding available per project application
- Match funding requirements
- Post Christmas Big Pot
- Scoring/ approving applications
- Should grants be spent by financial year-end?
- Payments of Grants (in advance or not?)
- Quarterly / Annual Monitoring/ evaluation
- Attracting more applications from urban core areas
- Application form and Guidance document

3.3 It was further agreed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010 that the Funding amount of £4,000 per area should remain and should not be part of the review.

3.4 The review was carried out by two sub groups, which were made up of members and officers. The first group; Cllrs Jones and Farrington and officer, Chris Smith looked at the existing Application form and Guidance document. The second group; Cllrs Lane and Hood and officers Phil Marriott and Chris Smith looked at the other processes listed in 3.3

3.5 The **recommendations** to come out of the review are as follows:

#### **Deadlines for submitting applications**

Deadlines for applications to be submitted should remain as the end of the month before the meetings start i.e.: February, May, August and November.

If projects are submitted after the deadline of the big pot they can go to the March Meeting to be approved, thus creating a further end of February deadline.

The deadline for submitting applications into the big pot after Christmas should be brought forward from the end of February to the end of January.

### **Maximum amount of funding available per project application**

The Maximum amount that an application can apply for should remain at £2,500 between April and December

### **Match funding requirements**

The new match funding requirements will be as follows

<b>Amount of grant</b>	<b>Minimum matched funding requirement</b>
Less the £500	Volunteer time only
£501 - £1,500	25% of the value of the project
£1,500 - £2,500	50% of the value of the project

### **Post Christmas Big Pot**

The post Christmas 'Big Pot' should remain but will only be open for applications until the end of January. The maximum amount that can be applied for out of the 'big pot' is reduced down from £5,000 to £1,000.

If applications submitted to the Big Pot are of a similar standard, weighting should be given to the areas that had an under spend.

### **Scoring/ approving applications**

The initial scoring of an application should continue to be done by the relevant Safer Neighbourhoods Officer and the Safer Communities Manager

The final approval of each project should continue be done at the public Safer Neighbourhoods meetings, (with the exception of those funded out of the 'big pot')

### **Should grants be spent by financial year-end?**

All projects approved prior to December should spend their funding before the end of March unless a written request is made to the Partnership for an extension. Those funded via the big pot will have to the following March to spend their funding.

### **Payments of Grants (in advance or not?)**

The existing system should be amended so that payments are not made until the applicant requests the money. Currently the payment is made as soon as the conditions of grant are signed by the applicant.

### **Quarterly / Annual Monitoring & Evaluations**

Quarterly monitoring should not be introduced, as it would be too demanding on applicants. All projects will continue be sent a monitoring and evaluation document at the end of the financial year with a requirement to submit all evidence of spend. The Safer Neighbourhoods assistant should diarise this to chase after 30 days and a warning letter should be produced if they still do not respond stating that legal action could be taken should they not provide adequate evidence of spend.

## **Attracting more applications from urban core areas**

More emphasis should be given at the Safer Neighbourhood meetings on promoting the assistance that is available to help set up projects and to complete Application forms.

This should also be detailed on the Website where the Application forms and Guidance document are available and it should also be clearly detailed on the covering letter that is issued with the Application forms.

### **Application form and Guidance document**

The application form has been amended to offer more help to the applicant; it now refers to relevant sections in the Guidance, which in turn has now been numbered. The application form also now asks for a delivery time to be put on the projects and some of the language has been changed to be more user friendly. The capital / revenue breakdown has also been removed.

The Guidance document has been amended to reflect the proposed changes that have come out of the review. It has also been split into numbered sections and the pages have been numbered. Some of the language has also been made more simplistic and the deadline dates for applications have been added in. The revised Application form and Guidance are attached as appendices.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The total grant funding available for communities to bid into will remain at £24,000. This is split between the 6 Safer Neighbourhood areas. Each area will be awarded £4,000 to spend during the financial year. The funding for the scheme comes from the Safer South Derbyshire's core funding budget and is made up of contributions from the District Council and the Police via the BCU funding

## **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 The new Plan will aid and improve the co-ordination of multi agency action against crime and Disorder and thus will contribute to achieving many of the Safer and Healthier related targets contained within the Corporate Plan.

## **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 The Safer Neighbourhoods funding stream provides the local community with an opportunity to assist the Partnership and police in identifying and tackling local issues. It can help keep community buildings safe and secure, encourage local young peoples groups to form and encourage other members of the community to

## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 Significant progress has been made during the 4 years that the Safer Neighbourhoods meetings have been operating. The funding stream is a major part of enabling the community to be involved with assisting in reducing crime and disorder in their local communities. It is important that the funding stream remains accessible for all groups in the community and is not overly arduous whilst still remaining robust and in line with audit requirements.

## 8.0 **Background Papers**

The Safer Neighbourhoods Funding Application form (app1)  
The Safer Neighbourhoods Funding Guidance (app2)