

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting1st February 2007

1. Title of Item/Report

Voluntary Sector Support Fund Allocations 2007/2008

2. Record of the Decision

Members noted that at its meeting held on 11th November 2004 Cabinet agreed indicative allocations for the main voluntary sector organisations through to March 2008. An interim report was submitted to Cabinet on 9th March 2006 outlining changes to the sector, including new governance arrangements and agreeing allocations for 2006/7 subject to compliance by recipients in meeting the Council's 'Code of Practice-Governance'. At that meeting Cabinet also agreed a comprehensive review of the fund later in the year to reflect changes to the sector including an independent review of the Stockton Voluntary Development Agency (SVDA) and Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association (SRCGA) which was nearing completion.

Members were updated about a process to carry out a comprehensive review to culminate in a report to Cabinet in Autumn 2007 that would recommend the process for distributing the funding allocations within the framework of a medium term financial plan.

It was explained that recipient organisations of the core funding included both umbrella organisations and deliverers of services, who signed a core funding agreement with the Council. The review offered an opportunity to develop more of a commissioning approach to the delivery of services with a stronger alignment of outcomes to support key objectives in the Community Strategy. It was anticipated that allocations would need to be of sufficient duration to allow organisations to forward plan in the medium term in line with the Council's own financial planning and this would allow the setting of longer term service delivery outcomes.

A great deal of progress had been made on governance and performance management over the last year with the introduction of the Council's Code of Practice-Governance and the development of a database of voluntary sector organisations who were in compliance with the code. It was a condition of any grants or contracts to the voluntary/community sector that organisations were in compliance with

the code.

Allocations to umbrella organisations were already linked to performance against a series of milestones, which would indicate support to the wider voluntary/community sector. Differentiating between umbrella organisations and those delivering services would allow the Council to strengthen this approach by including consultation with the umbrella organisations 'client organisations', particularly the smaller organisations on what support they needed from the umbrella organisations as part of the review of the VSSCF. It was likely that this would identify, amongst other things, a need for support around constitutions, registering as a charity, human resources and financial advice or signposting to such advice. Consulting the 'client' organisations at this point could allow the Council to engage them in the annual evaluation of the performance of their umbrella organisation, which formed part of recipient organisations Core Funding Agreement. This approach could promote greater and more consistent engagement of the sector with their umbrella organisations and vice versa.

It was explained that the Democratic Services Unit had conducted a review of Member representation on outside bodies and the insurance arrangements that organisations had in place to cover Members who served on them. The initial proposals, from the review of the VDA/SRCGA, indicated that any new umbrella organisation arising from the review would not be seeking councillor representation on the Board of Directors. The review of the voluntary sector core funding afforded the opportunity to consult Members on whether they wanted formal representation on those outside bodies and to explore other models of engagement for Members.

It was anticipated that the independent review of the Stockton Voluntary Development Agency (SVDA) and Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association (SRCGA) umbrella organisations would be finalised and organisational changes implemented. Therefore it was proposed to hold a seminar in July to inform Council Members of the final arrangements and to kick start the review of the Voluntary Sector Support Core Funding. This seminar would also include representation from services across the Council to help identify desired outcomes from the voluntary sector which would support key strategies. It would be important to build into the review consultation with the voluntary and community sector so the following timetable and stages were proposed to culminate in a report to Cabinet in November 2007.

Timetable for review

Beginning of July Member and officer consultation seminar to discuss -

Umbrella organisations/ delivery organisations
Core funding/commissioning
Governance/Performance management
Member representation on boards

July –Sept Consultation with the recipient voluntary sector organisations, the other VCS organisations registered on the Council's 'Code of Practice-Governance ' database and other voluntary sector organisations in the Borough

November 2007 Report to Cabinet
Formal notification to existing recipients of any changes to the allocations.

It would be necessary to allow organisations a lead in time if it was proposed that any new arrangements for the core funding be implemented following the review. There would however be a significant pressure on resources if further NRF allocations were not part of the forthcoming Government Spending Review.

RESOLVED that

1. funding from the Voluntary Sector Support Fund be approved for allocation to the Voluntary Sector for the financial year 2007/8 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report and Core Funding Agreements (CFA) be extended for that period.
2. the allocations for 2007/8 as detailed in Appendix 1 be approved subject to compliance by recipients in meeting the 'Code of Practice – Governance'
3. approval for any changes within recommended allocations, plus or minus 10% of that detailed in Appendix 1, be delegated to the Corporate Director for Development and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport.
4. a comprehensive review of the Voluntary Sector Support Fund arrangements be undertaken and a report be brought back to Cabinet in November in light of the independent review of the Stockton Voluntary Development Agency (SVDA) and Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association (SRCGA) merger which was underway, governance issues and other changes within the sector.

5. as part of the Voluntary Sector Support Fund review Members be consulted on the options for formal representation on the Boards of recipient organisations

6. a protocol be agreed for Officer support to the Management Boards of Voluntary Sector Support Fund recipients.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To release funds to the recipient organisations early in the new financial year 2007/8. To outline a timetable for a more fundamental review by November 2007 when the sector's review of two key umbrella organisations had been completed and implementation began.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Coleman declared a personal prejudicial interest in this item as he was a Member of the Stockton International Family Centre Management Board . Cllr Coleman left the meeting for the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Gibson declared a personal prejudicial interest in this item as he was a Member of the Newtown Resource Centre Management Board . Cllr Gibson left the meeting for the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Nelson declared a personal prejudicial interest in this item as he was a Member of the Stockton District Advice and Information and Advice Service Board. Cllr Nelson left the meeting for the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Kirton declared a personal prejudicial interest in this item as he was a Member of the Corner House Management Board . Cllr Kirton left the meeting for the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Mrs Cains declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in this item as her husband served on the Stockton District Advice and Information Board.

Councillor Johnson declared a personal, non prejudicial interest in this item as her husband served on the Stockton International Family Centre

Management Board.

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight Friday 9th February 2007

Proper Officer
06 July 2007