

## COMMUNITY CASHBACK

### Top Lines:

Asset recovery is critical to the fight against all levels of crime and is one of the Government's top priorities for law enforcement. We are determined to stop criminals profiting from crimes which affect the lives of the law abiding majority.

The Community Cashback scheme is an innovative use of recovered criminal assets which will see up to £4 million reinvested locally this year for the benefit of communities – ensuring local people benefit from the money we have taken from criminals and giving them confidence in the criminal justice service and a say in how it works.

Each of the 42 criminal justice areas in England and Wales will have access to around £95,000 to use on suitable community projects suggested by local people, funding around 100 projects.

The public can nominate projects for funding through neighbourhood policing meetings, citizens' panels, local authority consultation meetings or through other local forums. In addition, we are today launching the Community Cashback website. There the public can suggest projects for funding in their area and have their say on projects nominated by others in their community. <http://cashback.cjonline.gov.uk>

Seizing criminal assets delivers a wide range of benefits, from depriving criminals of capital to reducing the incentives for crime and the harm caused by crime, as well as promoting fairness and confidence in the criminal justice system.

There has been a £64 million increase in the value of assets recovered in the last five years with £148 million seized in 08/09. These significant achievements have resulted in the Government setting an ambitious new target to double the amount seized to £250 million by 2009-10.

Projects nominated by local communities will then be put forward by the Local Criminal Justice Board for central scrutiny to ensure they are viable and within the intended scope of the scheme. Whilst we cannot pre-empt the outcome, if there is no obvious reason not to approve funding, the proposal is likely to be successful.

The Government has committed to looking at ways communities might be given more of a say in how recovered assets are spent locally commitments (Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice Green Paper) and is seeking views on other ways in which we might give communities more of a say in this issue.

### Q&A

#### **Why has it taken until now to launch Community Cashback when the Prime Minister announced it back in May?**

The Prime Minister announced in May that the fund was being established. We have since been finalising the Community Cashback scheme rules and putting in place the supporting website and communications arrangements to make sure it works as intended.

## **What is Community Cashback?**

The Community Cashback scheme is an innovative use of recovered criminal assets which will see up to £4 million reinvested locally this year for the benefit of communities – ensuring local people benefit from the money we have taken from criminals and giving them confidence in the criminal justice service and a say in how it works.

It will run for 2009/10 and gives the public a say in how cash recovered from criminals can be reinvested in community-focused projects for the benefit of local people.

It delivers on recent commitments (Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice Green Paper) that the Government would look at how communities might be given more of a say in how recovered assets are spent locally.

The Government is seeking views on other ways in which we might give communities more of a say in this issue.

The scheme aims to:

- Raise the profile of asset recovery as an important tool in disrupting and preventing criminal activity and taking the cash out of crime by seizing criminal's ill-gotten gains;
- Give local people more of a say in how the recovered assets can be reinvested within their neighbourhoods and communities; and
- To boost public confidence in criminal justice services and demonstrate that justice is being done by making sure that people can see it being done in their area.

## **Where has the money come from?**

The £4 million fund is made up from Departmental and Agency contributions to the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS). Contributions are as follows:

Home Office	£2.0 m
AGO (CPS/RCPO/SFO)	£0.75m
HMCS/MoJ	£0.50m
HMRC/ACPO/SOCA	£0.75m

A total of £144million has now been allocated to frontline and Government departments for their asset recovery work in 2008/09.

## **How much will each project get?**

Each LCJB is limited to apply for £95,000 in funding – that could be made up of a single bid or several.

## **How many projects will be funded?**

We anticipate being able to fund over 100 projects across England and Wales. We hope that the first batch of projects will be completed by the end of the 2009/10 financial year

## **How are they nominated and who chooses where the money goes?**

The public can nominate projects for funding through neighbourhood policing meetings, citizens' panels, local authority consultation meetings or through other local forums. In addition, we are today launching the Community Cashback website. There the public can suggest projects for funding in their area and have their say on projects nominated by others in their community. <http://cashback.cjonline.gov.uk>

## **Why are we only using £4m out of such a large sum of money?**

All the money recovered from criminals already benefits the community by being paid back to frontline services and Government departments responsible for keeping communities safe, bringing criminals to justice and seizing their assets.

This new fund is designed to divert some of that money to projects nominated by the community ensuring local people benefit even more directly from the money we have taken from criminals, giving them confidence in the criminal justice service and a say in how it works.

## **What is the future of the fund and why are we not committing to carry it on next year?**

This is an innovative fund and we will measure its impact over this year. Any decisions on its future will be made in due course.

## **Are you not depriving frontline services of much need money with this fund?**

We believe it is important for the community to have a say in how some of this money is spent. The £144 million of recovered assets being paid back to frontline services and Government departments is a substantial sum of money that will benefit the police and key criminal justice agencies.

## **The time scales for suggesting and submitting projects are very tight**

We have tried to build in as much time as possible for the public to suggest and have their say on project proposals and for local crime and justice services to submit bids. The final cut-off for submitting proposals for funding is 30 September – a full three months away. We think this allows enough time for the public to have their say and for bids to be submitted.

## **There won't be enough time to get the projects underway and completed this year**

We are confident that there is time to get some good quality, community-focused local projects running or completed this year.

## **What if local areas don't have any ideas for projects to submit?**

We want to encourage areas to bid on behalf of their communities but this is an entirely voluntary scheme and areas do not have to participate.

## **What will happen to any un-spent money?**

At the end of September we will try to match unspent funds to good quality projects in areas which were not submitted initially because they would have exceeded their area maximum of £95,000. We will consider carefully what happens to any under spend as and when the situation arises but we are clear that the money should be used to benefit communities.

## **£95,000 for 42 LCJBs is only £3.9million: what happens to the other £100,000?**

The £95,000 area limit ensures that all 42 areas start with the same ring-fenced amount. The £100,000 will be added into the pot of unspent money in September when the area ring-fence is removed and that sum will be available for allocation anywhere in England and Wales.

## **Is Community Cashback available in Scotland?**

The scheme applies to England and Wales only. Scotland has its own asset recovery scheme.

### **ASSET RECOVERY**

Under the Asset Recovery Incentive Scheme, the Home Office pays back to front line agencies, including the police, 50 per cent of all assets recovered.

In the final quarter of 08/09 £7 million is being paid to police forces in England and Wales. Other major recipients are as follows:

SOCA	- £4.57 million
HMCS	- £3.06 million
CPS	- £2.67 million
HMRC	- £2.74 million

Allocations to individual police forces vary from £11,000 (Warwickshire police) to £2.3 million (Metropolitan Police Service)

## **Why can't police forces get a bigger share of recovered assets?**

The police are generally content with their 50% share from seized and forfeited cash. In recognition of police work in this area we are now giving them a bigger share of these receipts. Previously there was an equal 3 way split of confiscations receipts (16.66%/16.66%/16.66%) between police/prosecutors/ HM courts service. This has now been changed to 18.75%/18.75%/12.5%. So the police are getting a bit more.

## **What conditions are attached to the use of funds allocated to police forces under the assets recovery incentive scheme?**

There are no formal conditions attached to the use of funds allocated under the asset recovery incentive scheme. Police forces are encouraged to use the funds for further investment in asset recovery and financial investigation, tackling crime and, where appropriate, on local community initiatives. The Home Office monitors use of incentive

monies by police forces and other agencies to ensure propriety. Returns from forces on the use of these funds indicate full compliance with Home Office recommendations.

**What initiatives have been funded by police forces from the incentive scheme?**

Police forces have invested, or plan to invest, most of the monies from the incentive scheme in further developing their asset recovery and financial investigation capacity, with the funding of Financial Investigator posts, money laundering teams and asset recovery operations. In addition funds have been used to tackle gun crime and criminal networks in London. The Metropolitan Police has also allocated around £500,000 to the Safer London Foundation, a registered charity, which distributes the funds to help a range of local community schemes. Other community initiatives across the country include road shows, prevention of doorstep crime, over 60s club, and provision of equipment for a faith based community centre.

**Is this all a revenue generation scheme for a cash-strapped Home Office?**

No. The Government is clear as are all our front line stakeholders that our overriding aim is to reduce the harm caused by crime by the seizure of criminal assets. Clearly the more we seize, the more we reduce criminals working capital and the more we can reduce the harm they cause to our communities.

**How confident are you that you will reach the £250m target for recovered assets in 09/10?**

We have a robust plan in place. However the target is very challenging. We have commitment from front-line stakeholders and we are incentivising them to do more. We are investigating any blockages in the asset recovery pipeline and will smooth them out to simplify the process. We are investing in and rolling out regional Centres of Excellence on confiscation enforcement and have renewed investment in the 5 Regional Asset Recovery Teams.