

BETTER NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES FUND – YEAR ‘4’ LOCAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY BEYOND YEAR 4

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report appraises Community Planning Partners on the current and future status of the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund in Argyll and Bute.
- 1.2 Funding from the Scottish Executive, initially for 3 years, has been extended to March 2006. The initial allocation of £2.7m is available for the provision of services to October 2005. An additional 0.9m allows for services to be continued and rolled out to other parts of Argyll and Bute until March 2006.
- 1.3 Within this report are recommendations for the extension of Better Neighbourhood Services, to be included in the Year ‘4’ Local Outcome Agreement as required by the Executive. The recommendations have been formulated taking full account of the specific criteria and funding conditions set out by the Executive.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Community Planning Partnership endorse the proposal that on the basis of the guidance provided by the Scottish Executive and the requirement to link the additional expenditure to areas of deprivation, a proposal that the additional £900,000 be expended as follows:
 - (i) Continue existing services on the 8 Atlantic islands and in South Kintyre from October 2005 until March 2006. This will cost an estimated additional **£87,550** over and above the budget provision of **£805,579** for 05/06.
 - (ii) The estimated balance **£812,450** will be used to:
 - a) Roll out older people’s services to 5 wards in Bute and Cowal which are identified as amongst the most deprived in Argyll and Bute in the social deprivation study recently commissioned by the Community Planning Partnership. These wards are Bute North, Bute Central, Milton, Ardenslate and Holy Loch.
 - b) Include the island of Lismore in the island project due to the problems of geographical isolation, the difficulties older people have accessing services and the high proportion of the population (35%) 50 people, aged over 65.
 - c) Roll out support service models established by the Community Support Network in South Kintyre, to families with disabled children across Argyll and Bute.
- 2.2 The Community Planning Partnership are asked to give early consideration to the sustainability issues for the services developed by the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund and support the Council in its representations to the Executive to secure ongoing funding.
- 2.3 As it is clear that none of the options available will provide total resolution of the problem, the Council and Community Planning partners are asked to consider future funding implications and impact for mainstream budgets. Community Services are examining all possible opportunities for ensuring the sustainability of BNS services. As part of the sustainability strategy we will examine a number of options for funding from other potential sources

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Argyll and Bute Council is one of twelve local authorities to benefit from in The Better Neighbourhood Services Fund pilot project. The purpose of the fund is to improve services in Scotland’s most deprived neighbourhoods. It is intended to advance the Social Justice objectives of the Scottish Executive.
- 3.2 Argyll and Bute has approval for two local outcome agreements.
 - (1) ‘Stay Put’ Project on Coll, Colonsay, Gigha, Iona, Islay, Jura , Mull and Tiree which has as its main objective to allow older people to continue to live in island communities as independently

as possible with an acceptable quality of life by providing a range of additional services and support. This is to benefit not only the older person, but their families and the island communities as a whole.

- (2) Community Support Network in Campbeltown, South Kintyre and Islay. Its aim is to help to support and maintain elderly vulnerable adults in their own homes and communities for as long as possible and improve their independence and life choices. It also supports families with disabled children by providing respite care and other support services to give families with a disabled child an improved quality of life.
- 3.3 The outcome agreements were approved by the Scottish Executive in July 2002 and services commenced in November 2002. The final expenditure from the initial 3 year allocation is programmed to end October 2005. The allocation for the first three years, 2002 –2005 was £2.7m.
- 3.4 Since commencement of services in November 2002 it has been necessary to revise the outcomes and a revised outcome agreement was agreed with the BNS Steering Group and submitted to the Executive and approved in January 2004.
- 3.5 Following submission of the last annual report in October 2003 and the acknowledgement of the good progress made, the Executive have indicated that a further **£900,000** will be made available in 2004/2005, to continue the BNS work.
- 3.6 This additional funding is subject to the submission of a year '4' local outcome agreement. The funding has to be fully expended by March 2006. This will mean that in the financial year 2005/2006 there will be a total of **£1.7m** BNSF money to be spent.

4. SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE GUIDANCE ON YEAR '4' LOA

- 4.1 The Council along with its Community Planning partners are required to decide how and where the Year 4 resources are to be targeted. The year 4 LOA will need to fit with the Council's overall regeneration outcome agreement including, integration of SIP areas and priorities agreed through the Community Ownership programme for housing.
- 4.2 The purpose of the BNSF funding allocated in 2004-05 (In Argyll this will mean 2005-06) is to achieve the outputs and outcomes set out for year '4' LOA. Funding can be used to continue the existing BNSF services/projects for a longer time period and/or to enhance the scale, impact or duration of the most effective BNSF services/projects. Pathfinders must continue to focus on the most disadvantaged communities.
- 4.3 Funding should not be used to support new services/projects. It should also not be used to fund capital projects with a value in excess of £50,000.
- 4.4 A tender will shortly go out for an evaluation of the projects in accordance with guidance. As it is not due to be completed until March 2005, this will only report on two full operational years in Argyll and Bute. Decisions on year 4 LOA will have to be taken without the benefit of an evaluation.
- 4.5 Recent dialogue with the Executive has confirmed that they do not wish to consider new outcomes or outputs but would be prepared to consider the roll out of existing BNS services to other geographical areas. The Executive will not give any assurance that funding will be available for these new services after March 2006.

5. SUSTAINABILITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED IN YEARS 1 – 3

- 5.1 Local authorities and their Community Planning partners will be expected to demonstrate a financial commitment to sustaining effective BNSF services/projects in the future. The 2003-04 and subsequent Annual Reports are required to provide evidence of this commitment. The annual report has to be submitted by end of September 2004 along with the Year '4' LOA and will therefore require to be completed by end of July.
- 5.2 Discussion is therefore required on the sustainability, or otherwise, of BNS services after Executive ring-fenced funding is withdrawn.
- 5.3 The main areas of expenditure for services currently provided to deliver the outputs have estimated annual revenue costs amounting to **£889,636**. Details of the projects and service outputs in place to achieve the agreed outcomes are included at Appendix 1.

6. YEAR '4' LOCAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 6.1 Taking account of the Scottish Executive guidance and the limited time available to both develop and deliver services with the additional funding, it is proposed that the Year '4' LOA focuses attention on those wards which are highlighted as being amongst the most deprived and which do not currently benefit from BNSF.
- 6.2 The report on deprivation and social exclusion recently produced for the Community Planning Partnership makes specific reference to the high proportion of older people in Argyll and Bute. Five wards in particular, are identified in Bute & Cowal have high numbers of older people with over a quarter of the ward population aged 65 and over.
- 6.3 The report acknowledges that services for older people are under pressure and there are cases of older people struggling with severe problems in isolated conditions. The issues highlighted are:
- Confusion over benefits,
 - Lack of information and information systems,
 - Loss of mobility, personal and vehicular, created barriers to social interaction, health care and shopping.
- 6.4 All these issues have been addressed through the development of the BNS projects for older people in South Kintyre and the Atlantic Islands and can be addressed in Bute and Cowal if the services are expanded to this area.
- 6.5 On this basis it is proposed that the services for older people be developed in 5 wards in Bute & Cowal which feature at the top of the deprivation study: Bute North, Bute Central, Milton, Ardenslate and Holy Loch. The expansion of the project to the wider Bute and Cowal community would not fulfil the requirement to focus on the most deprived areas and to include other deprived areas in Argyll and Bute would dilute the effectiveness and impact of the resources available.
- 6.6 The outcomes set out in the Year '4' LOA will remain the same as the existing LOA's. These outcomes are consistent with priorities identified in both the Community Planning Partnership Action Plan, Joint Health Improvement Plan and the Corporate Plan. These are:

For Older People:

- ***Increase in number of older people supported to live in their own homes,***
- ***Increase benefit uptake,***
- ***Increase and improve leisure, recreational and social choices with greater uptake,***
- ***Increased safety within the home for older people,***
- ***Increased satisfaction of services offered.***

For families with a disabled child:

- ***Increase in number of children with a disability provided with local short breaks,***
- ***Increase in number of local support services for families with a disabled child,***
- ***Greater satisfaction with local bespoke services,***
- ***Increased benefit uptake,***
- ***Establishment of a skilled carer network***

- 6.7 Due to the time-limited nature of the funding, the services developed will require to harness and expand existing local resources rather than create additional staff to deliver additional services.
- 6.8 Services for families with a disabled child will be developed across all parts of Argyll due to the wide geographic spread of relatively small numbers of families. Details of the numbers recorded across the authority are shown in the table below:

LOCALITY	NO OF CHILDREN	% OF POPULATION
Helensburgh & Lomond	461	3.8%
Cowal	118	3.8%
Bute	33	2.2%
North Argyll	90	2.1%
Mid Argyll	35	1.5%
Kintyre	45	2.0%
Islay	17	2.0%

Source: Argyll and Clyde NHS Board

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The level of funding available in 2005/2006 provides the Council and its Community Planning partners with an opportunity to develop and improve services for older people and families with disabled children and raise levels of satisfaction with service provision.
- 7.2 However, investment in these services may result in service users having their expectations raised and consequently if the provision of the service is only for a limited period of time, the net result may be an overall increase in dissatisfaction if services are then withdrawn at March 2006.
- 7.3 Scottish Executive short-term funding initiatives are creating significant difficulties for local authority budget management and service planning with Community Planning Partners.

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