

SUPPORT TO THIRD SECTOR

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Representatives of the 3rd Sector have raised with the Council, through meetings of the Demonstration Project and elsewhere, the issue of a per diem allowance. This is payment of a daily allowance for attendance at meetings.
- 1.2 This has come up, particularly in relation to the Demonstration Project, as the Council have asked two representatives of the 3rd Sector to attend as Board members, however, everyone else attending is being paid by their employer to attend. The 3rd Sector representatives are either attending in their own time or using their employers' time to attend.
- 1.3 It should be noted that this is separate from the issue of expenses. It is accepted that it is appropriate to pay reasonable out of pocket expenses to 3rd Sector representatives attending certain meetings.
- 1.4 It was agreed with the 3rd Sector that consideration would be given to the request for a "per diem" payment and that a paper would be presented to the FAB Partnership on this issue.

2. Issues

- 2.1 This request raises a number of issues:
 - * Is it fair for the Council to ask for 3rd Sector representation at meetings without being willing to pay for this?
 - * Are some organisations already being funded to carry out this type of function, raising the question of double funding if an allowance is paid?
 - * If we restrict 3rd Sector involvement to those organisations funded to undertake this type of activity is that imposing unduly narrow constraint on who can be involved from the 3rd Sector?
 - * Is it possible to agree criteria for making payments in appropriate circumstances that do not result in double funding and do not create an open ended commitment that cannot be sustained financially?

3. Practice Elsewhere

3.1 In broad terms the National Standards for Community Engagement set out what should be done to encourage participants' involvement in engagement. Standard 2, "Support", sets out under indicator 3 'financial business' issues which should be considered:

- * out of pocket expenses
- * loss of earnings
- * suitable transport
- * care of dependants
- * personal assistance
- * communication aids
- * timing of meetings

The only indicator here that seems relevant to the issue is "loss of earnings." However, this is still not the same as a "per diem" allowance.

3.2 If Third Sector attendance is requested at strategic meetings, whether by local authority, or by local or national agencies, this is normally expected to be in the organisation's time, and without an attendance allowance. This is generally acceptable if it is seen to be in the interests of the Third Sector in general or an organisation in particular. The choice to participate would normally be in the hands of the Third Sector itself, and there would therefore have to be some benefit to the organisation(s).

3.3 The Scottish Government's new infrastructure proposal for third sector interfaces would encourage such decision-making to come from the Third sector itself. Future funding will go to the third sector as one, and participation at meetings as well as distribution of funds should therefore be sector-led.

3.4 It is not common for "per diem" allowances to be paid, and where this is the case it tends to be when local authority or agencies ask the Third Sector to participate in a particular task, for example research, national advisory groups, etc, where the relationship is more like a consultancy one. This arrangement is unlikely to be sustainable on a widespread basis, but there is a clear argument in favour of this approach when seeking the skills and expertise of the Third Sector for a specific task.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The payment of expenses to third sector organisations

for attendance at agreed meetings should continue where it is agreed in advance and it is clear that the organisation is not already funded to undertake this work.

- 4.2 As progress is made on the developments of a third sector interface, decisions on third sector attendance and participation at meetings and events will taken by the third sector as a whole on the basis of joint funding, the issue could be re-visited at that time.
- 4.3A “per diem” allowance should only be considered for payment to third sector organisations when their attendance is sought for a particular task that requires their knowledge, expertise and experience and where it is clear that they are not already being funded for that purpose. Such payments should be considered and agreed at the outset and would be the exception rather than the rule.
- 4.4 The CPP and Council support and encourage third sector attendance by arranging suitable venues with video-conferencing where possible.