

**Progress Report of the Children Young People and Healthy Communities Task Group – Access to Funding by Voluntary Groups**

**1. Introduction**

Following its meeting on the 4 February 2010, it was agreed that the Children, Young People and Healthy Communities OSC would set up a one Member Task and Finish Group (TFG) to consider ways in which the Council supports voluntary/third sector groups in accessing funding. Councillor S Meteer was nominated to the TFG.

**2. Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference were;

To assess how the Council supports voluntary groups in accessing funding and how any support is recorded and managed.

**3. Consultees**

The TFG consulted internally via Corporate Management Team and Service Managers. They were asked to provide contact details of officers within their services who may have links to voluntary groups and who may support their access to funding. The Leader of the Council, the Executive Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture and the County Council Neighbourhood Forum Area Officer were also consulted.

**4. Current Support**

The way in which the Council offers support to voluntary groups accessing funding varies across services. There is only one fund which groups can approach the Council directly for and that is within Cultural Services.

The Leader of the Council also drew it to the attention of the TFG that other funding sources, such as LABGI (Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme) were available to voluntary business groups such as Enterprise Whitehaven who are interested in improving the commercial sector.

The following support is available;

**4.1 Cultural Services**

This is the only area scheme the TFG is aware of which has an allocation of funding which it can directly allocate. This is through its Local Arts Initiative Scheme. The Scheme can offer small amounts of funding to artists, schools and community groups. The groups must

demonstrate that their objectives meet those of the Service Plan as part of the criteria for accessing funding. This year the fund has had 16 successful applications (18 in total) from a range of organisations throughout Copeland. Usually funding does not exceed more than £300. Applicants may only apply once in any one year.

This year to date, the fund has committed £4,705.00 in grant allocation which has enabled £55,693.56 to be spent on arts projects within the borough. The total amount of grants that have been claimed to date is £3,905.00 and we are awaiting evaluation claim forms for another £800.

#### **4.2 Regeneration**

Two officers within the regeneration team have access to a programme called Grant Finder. This was purchased by the team so that searches could be carried out to source funding for charity/community/third sector groups if they approach the council making funding enquiries. Grant Finder has been used in the past on an ad hoc basis. Groups are then able to use the information provided by Grant Finder to submit funding applications.

The Regeneration Team advised that they refer groups to the CVS who are recognised as being able to provide funding advice through their Funder Finder programme and other support. The CVS also publicise their programme widely to voluntary groups.

#### **4.3 Other support**

Recently the council has given financial support to the Citizen's Advice Bureau (£32,000) and Cumbria Law Centre (£15,000). While this is relevant, it was felt in relation to the CAB and CLC that its terms of reference of this Task and Finish Group only extended to smaller scale voluntary groups.

Support in kind is also evident. For example the Leader of the Council brought it to the attention of the TFG that the Wellington Pit Memorial group has had officer support from the Development Services team in recent months in establishing its memorial. The council is also supporting the group with drawing up a lease.

### **5. Other initiatives**

There are also other initiatives in which the Council is recognised as a partner. However, they may not necessarily, or directly, impact on how voluntary groups access funding.

#### **5.1 The Cumbria Compact**

On 28 July 2009 the Executive agreed that the Council should sign up to the Cumbria Compact. The Cumbria Compact is an agreement between the third sector and statutory organisations in Cumbria. It is a framework of principles and commitments and details how the sectors will work better together to improve their working relationships. A national compact was agreed in 1998, and local ones have followed.

Funding in itself is not a significant aspect of the Compact. The overall aim of the Compact is to improve the quality of support to the voluntary sector and while that support can come in the form of accessing funding, it can also be through service level agreements and commissioning of services.

The Council is currently represented on the Compact by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services until a permanent officer 'champion' is identified.

## **5.2 County Council Neighbourhood Forums**

The Copeland Area Neighbourhood Forum works with community groups and organisations to encourage community involvement in local democracy.

The Neighbourhood Forums have a wide remit but among those is one to provide an opportunity for small grants to be fairly distributed to community/voluntary groups. It works closely with the CVS to offer support to groups.

Copeland Borough Council has contributed £10,000 to the Neighbourhood Forum Grants fund.

## **6 Findings and Future Development**

### **6.1 Ideas and views of the TFG**

The TFG has investigated whether there are any future plans to support access to funding for voluntary groups. It felt that the CVS was in a strong position to advise groups on where to go to access funding and did not want to duplicate work that was being done elsewhere. However it thought there ought to be a point of contact within Copeland Borough Council which voluntary groups could easily access, get practical help on setting up, establishing constitutions etc and signposting to funding providers.

### **6.2 Appointment of three Community Development Workers through the Copeland Community Fund**

The TFG have learned that following funding from the Copeland Community Fund, the Council is set to appoint three Community Development Workers. This initiative has been developed by the Copeland Community Fund on which the Leader of the Council sits. The Community Development Workers will work with groups to build and develop projects, capability, capacity and skills. They will also assist in identifying funding opportunities from a wide range of funding providers.

The Leader of the Council added that as well as funding the three Community Development Worker posts, the Copeland Community Fund had also recently given £50,000 to Young Cumbria as a way of supporting activities for older youths in the borough.

## **7. Proposed Recommendations**

- 7.1 That the OSC notes the current ways in which the Council supports voluntary groups in accessing funding
- 7.2 That the OSC welcomes the Council's appointment of 3 Community Development Workers who have been funded by the Copeland Community Fund
- 7.3 That a system is developed which records approaches to the council from groups trying to access funding

7.4 That a link is built into the council's website to the CVS

7.4 The OSC recognises that this will address in part the issues raised by the TFG

Councillor Sam Meteer  
Task and Finish Group Chair

Jessica Hall  
Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer