

Report of: Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit

Title: Tackling Drugs

Ward: Blackbird Leys

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Key Decision: No

Lead Member: Cllr Susan Brown

Scrutiny responsibility: Finance/ Community

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is recommended to:

1. Note the recommendations of Council and to endorse the proposed way forward as set out in the report.

Background

1.1 On 3rd October 2005 the Council adopted a motion which resolved that:

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- a) where within the power of the Council to allocate funding that policy should reflect the priority of a public health/ education approach.
- b) With respect to the Community Action development (formerly Communities Against drugs), rather than the drip feed of emergency funding that offers a short term respite, funding should be allocated for at least a 3 year period to allow the group to establish itself, thus ensuring long term viability both in terms of staffing and premises. To this end Council returns this issue to the executive Board for reconsideration as a matter of priority:
- c) In any balanced drug strategy vigilantism has no place. While constructive community involvement is very much to be welcomed, groups which take it upon themselves to act as self-appointed law enforcers and claim to go ‘on patrol’ are not only unhelpful but

dangerous. Their activities are likely to intimidate the innocent rather than the guilty. They can play no benign role in a civilised society. "

- 1.2 A previous report to the Executive Committee on 12 September on the Community Against Drugs Project (now the Community Development Action Project) set out:
 - Funding of the Project
 - Project Difficulties
 - Benefits of the Project
 - A proposed way forward
- 1.3 The proposed way forward included the need focus on obtaining charitable status and sustained fund raising for the Project. It was explained that the Steering Group has been reinvigorated and funding had been secured from partners, including the Healthy Living Initiative, Primary Care Trust, Oxfordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Thames Valley Police. This additional funding will enable the project to continue until December 2005.
- 1.3 Oxford City Council officers from Neighbourhood Renewal and Strategy and Review will provide support to financially manage the project until it becomes a registered charity, when this role will be handed over the Board of Trustees. Once this has been established Oxford City Council will withdraw from the management of the project.
- 1.4 This report sets out the general context of funding for Tackling Drugs work and proposes that the Community Development Action Project should submit a grant application to the City Council's Grant to Community and Voluntary Groups and this application be considered alongside other applications and priorities for funding for community and voluntary groups.

The National Strategy for Tackling Drugs

- 2.1 The current national strategy for Tackling Drugs includes a series of interventions at all levels to concentrate on the most dangerous drugs and the most effected communities and individuals whose addiction and chaotic lifestyles are most harmful.
- 2.2 The 4 key aims of the strategy are to:
 - a) reduce the supply of illegal drugs
 - b) prevent young people from becoming drug misusers
 - c) reduce drug related crime
 - d) reduce the use of drugs through increased participation in treatment programmes.

Delivery at a Local Level

- 3.1. Local Drug and Alcohol Teams (DAATs) include representation of a number of agencies involved in the delivery of the Tackling Drug Strategy. These include the Police, Social Services, District Councils, County Councils and Primary care Trusts.
- 3.2. The work of the DAAT is underpinned by the commissioning of services, monitoring and reporting on performance and in communicating with stakeholders.
- 3.3. The Oxfordshire DAAT are recognised as one of the best drug treatment Commissioners in the country. CAD so not provide treatment services and therefore are unlikely to provide substantial funding from the DAAT.
- 3.4. The Oxfordshire Crime Reduction Partnership work closely with the DAAT to provide complimentary services focussing on prevention and support. This funding is earmarked for other projects but discussions will be held on providing support for the CAD project through their planning processes later on in the year.
- 3.5. Funding could be made available through Oxford City Council Voluntary and Community Grant Scheme although there are pressures on this Scheme. The scheme is generally oversubscribed by three times the amount of funding available. There are also additional pressures given the savings required for Supporting People funded schemes in the City (a reduction of £300,000 in Homelessness Services alone, including drug treatment services). Any application from CAD to this Grant Scheme therefore needs to be considered alongside other projects and priorities.

Progress made to date

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Renewal have agreed to pay for the lease on the premises used by CAD at 49 Barnes Road for the 3rd and 4th quarters of this financial year at a cost of £2,350.
- 4.2 CAD are still awaiting the results of their charity status. They have made applications to a number of agencies and trusts including the Big Lottery Fund and Arc. They are continuing to deliver the University of Lancaster funded project that is aimed at supporting vulnerable women and their families (for which they receive £20,000). By the end of this financial year it is estimated they will break even financially.

Conclusions

- 5.1 CAD has been provided with an application pack for grants available through the City Council's Grants to Community and Voluntary Groups scheme, the closing date for which is 30th November. This application can then be considered alongside other applications and priorities for funding for community and voluntary groups. It is anticipated that applications received will be considered by the Executive Board on 20th February 2006.
- 5.2 CAD is in reasonable financial position until the end of this financial year by which time they should know whether or not their grant applications have been successful, including their application to Oxford City Council's Grants to Community and Voluntary Groups.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Susan Brown
Strategic Director: Michael Lawrence
Legal and Democratic Services: Jeremy Thomas
Financial Management: Penney Gardner

There are no background papers.