

**REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 14 JUNE 2004**

**REPORT ON: SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME  
EVALUATION**

**REPORT BY: HEAD OF COMMUNITIES**

**REPORT NO: 428-2004**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report on the outcome of an evaluation and review of the Social Inclusion Partnership Small Grants Programme.
- 1.2 This report highlights the effectiveness of the existing SIP1 and SIP2 Small Grants programmes.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 note the effectiveness of the SIP small grants programme and the huge level of activity it generates.
- 2.2 recommend continuation of the existing programme and application procedures as part of Social Inclusion Partnership's transition into the Community Planning process.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 This report carries no direct financial implications.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 This report draws heavily on a study carried out by the SIP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, completed in January 2004.
- 4.2 The Small Grant Schemes seek to promote inclusion through the development of skills, knowledge and improved communications aimed at raising individual self-confidence and community pride. Appropriate methods include learning opportunities, support in obtaining resources (materials, computer hardware, premise upgrade) and in project delivery. 3
- 4.3 Activities in the geographic Social Inclusion Partnerships are enhanced through small award initiatives. The SIP1 and SIP2 Small Grant schemes together have one of the largest expenditures of any single SIP project. Awards up to a maximum of £5,000 are available for local community groups and voluntary organisations to promote inclusion within the SIP1 and SIP2 areas. Initiatives must contribute to the SIP regeneration themes (Stability, Empowerment, Prosperity and Sustainability) and the local area strategy.
- 4.4 The function of the Small Grant schemes is to promote social inclusion by:
  - Increasing community capability and identity
  - Filling gaps in local services
  - Improving cultural, leisure and learning opportunities
  - Supporting small innovative pilot projects

4.5 Awards provided have contributed towards:

- Information technology (especially computers, for project administration, promotion and publicity)
- Learning (French, aerobics, first aid, parenting, arts and crafts, gardening, drama, specialist computer software)
- Securing resources (room renovations, storage)
- Communications (printing, distributions, programme planning, newsletters)

4.6 Community organisations raise awareness and encourage participation through public events, newsletters and community-led activities. The Small Grants Scheme has supported these through awards for event expenses, volunteers' costs and crèche facilities.

4.7 SIP1 and SIP2 together received 148 applications for small awards during 2002/2003. Total sums of £96,501 SIP1 and £54,629 (SIP2) were granted during 2002/2003.

## 5.0 ACCESS

5.1 Almost a quarter of organisations heard about the SIP Small Grants Scheme through the SIP Implementation Team. A similar proportion of organisations heard about the Scheme through word of mouth rather than by any official route or in the media. Alternative sources were via community centre receptionists, other Dundee City Council sources and through existing contact with the SIP process.

5.2 A high number of organisations receiving small grants in 2003/2004 had submitted earlier applications for SIP funding, the majority of which had been successful.

5.3 Over 75% of small grant recipients anticipated continuing after their initiative was completed.

## 6.0 APPLICATION AND DELIVERY

6.1 Applicants perceived the straightforward application, short proposal form, speed of decision making and the acceptance of repeat applications by the same project as the main benefits of the Small Grants Scheme.

6.2 The majority of organisations received some level of support during the application process chiefly from SIP Team but also from Community Officers, university, college and adult learning tutors, training centres and the Dundee City Council Social Work Department.

6.3 Organisations received less support during the delivery of the project, although most were happy with this arrangement. Support received came from the same people as during the application process. Respondents reported satisfaction with the support given.

6.4 Over half the respondents stated that their organisation had spent six or more months planning and running the small grant initiative, and a quarter dedicated over one year on the project. Since the maximum award is £5,000, this suggests the seriousness with which community organisations view both the submission of funding bids and their own activities.

6.5 Projects produced a variety of records of their activities. Understandably records of accounts and written reports feature significantly as these are written into the condition of funding. Organisations at all levels frequently keep photographic records of their activities while those with access to technical support use video or CD-Rom. Other records listed by organisations include attendance sheets, newsletter entries, drama performance, physical activity classes, research evidence and the production of an action plan.

## **7.0 PROCESS**

- 7.1 Applicants and workers appreciate the speed with which small grants can be obtained, which facilitates a quicker response to community concerns. Residents respect rapid action or follow-up of their interests.
- 7.2 Organisations were happy with the level of support they could access during the delivery of the project.
- 7.3 The majority of awards are for sums of under £2,000. This would not indicate an increase in threshold level was appropriate. Organisations seeking larger awards should be supported to develop a stronger proposal for core funds. New community-led groups could stem from the repetition of proposals for similar events, for example community festivals, job clubs and programme development.

## **8.0 BENEFICIARIES**

- 8.1 Initiatives target communities; some of these include more specifically defined beneficiary groups than others. Applications for activities involving older people (over 50 years) are referred to Older People Engaging Needs (OPEN) for possible funding. A similar proportion of projects in both geographic SIPs focus their attention on families and young children.
- 8.2 Some small grant (and core) projects apply their services to each geographic area of their SIP. Areas also receive different levels of support from outside sources. Better Neighbourhood Services Fund (BNSF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF/ERF) are applicable to, and overlap with some SIP neighbourhoods, primarily Kirkton and Hilltown.
- 8.3 SIP2 Small Grants spend areas are closely defined and linked to the applicant organisation. The highest proportion of the SIP2 Small Grant budget is allocated in Whitfield, Charleston and Stobswell.
- 8.4 SIP1 awards support a diverse range of activities, largely focused on leisure activities, learning opportunities and community development and support.
- 8.5 SIP2 activities have less variety and chiefly centre on recreation (58%), health and community development.

## **9.0 COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 9.1 Organisations say that the greatest effects of small grant projects on communities are to fill gaps in service provision (35%) and to improve networks between organisations (25%).
- 9.2 Workers say that the small grant schemes increase community ownership by providing money for small, community-led ideas where the results are readily identifiable. The resources enable the development of ideas and are available to respond to diverse needs at short notice.
- 9.3 Statements such as “another first for the Stobswell area” and “get to know your new neighbours” provide evidence of the increase in local pride created through small grant projects. Small community awards provide “an opportunity for local people to unite in a common cause” ie an increase in community participation and involvement.
- 9.4 The reported impacts of SIP small grant projects on participants and communities are similar to those achieved through Awards for All Scotland, the National Lottery small grant scheme, although it appears improvements in the physical environment have more significance within the Dundee SIP Scheme.
- 9.5 Approximately 50% of organisations manage the project using the SIP award and in house resources, the rest seek additional funding to enable the project to continue. Additional funding can be anything from £100-£10,000 although rarely outside of these limits.

- 9.6 A high proportion of organisations aim to continue their work. Future plans involve enhancing the activity of the current project or developing a new initiative through a new small grant application. Four organisations are developing a larger proposal for a core grant application. A further four agencies report that the present initiative was a self contained project. Some organisations report that they are waiting outcomes of ongoing applications to funders including Dundee City Council.

## **10.0 OUTCOMES**

- 10.1 Whilst apparently available to a wide range of community organisations the assessment process of the Small Grant Schemes filters applications to other sponsors (Older People Engaging Needs OPEN, Empowering Communities Funds, Ardler/Kirkton Youth Strategy, Awards for All) when appropriate. The result is that Small Grant supported organisations reflect a bias of society in the SIP areas – older people are under-represented in both schemes due to OPEN funding and support for teenagers and young people appears over-exaggerated in SIP2. This Partnership does not have a core youth project with its own funding sources like Ardler/Kirkton Youth Strategy in SIP1. The awards, therefore, strategically target groups which other award categories are unable to assist.
- 10.2 The majority of Small Grant projects are perceived as successful by their applicant organisations and the SIP workers. Approximately one third of applicants say that their project would have existed anyway, without a small grant; a similar number would not have been undertaken without an award and a further third of applicants were uncertain what the outcome would have been had they not been supported.
- 10.3 Many initiatives work with a very specific resident group improving personal skills and wellbeing. Engaging residents in common interests is an initial step in the development of community values and fusion and provides participants with raised confidence for further engagement. Once active in a group participants have been able to access other groups and activities.
- 10.4 The survey suggests small awards are impacting in the community. Facilities are being upgraded and being made available to more groups. Learning initiatives have been developed which reflect certain needs (childcare, gardening, healthy eating) and interests (drama, decoupage) of residents including facilitating employment opportunities (accredited exercise to music training). Networks of organisations are gradually being established especially where small grants groups are subsidising the activities of core projects. The community group benefits from the larger project's experience and expertise.
- 10.5 Small Grants have supported a few innovative ideas enabling parents to learn French at the same time as their children, developing a family healthy eating course, a mobile play resource and junior savings clubs. Most expenditure is directed towards similar undertakings – developing programmes of activities, support for sessional staff, the purchase of equipment, event expenses and improvements to premises.

## **11.0 CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 Consultation has taken place with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning).
- 11.2 Partnership agencies, community representatives and voluntary sector representatives have also been consulted on their views of the SIP small grants scheme.

## **12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in the preparation of this report.

**Signed: Stewart Murdoch**  
**Head of Communities**

**Date: 4 June 2004**