
Community Partnership Agreements – Pilot Year Review and 2010/11 Decision

To: **Cabinet – 17th June 2010**

Main Portfolio Area: **Community Services**

By: **Sarah Phippin, Community Development Officer**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **Thanet District**

Summary: At the end of the financial year 2008/09 Cabinet adopted the Community Partnership Agreement (CPA) scheme as a support mechanism for the third sector in Thanet for 2009/10. This replaced the small grants scheme. The pilot year for CPAs has now ended and although this scheme has, currently, been continued into 2010/11, Cabinet are asked to decide if they wish for the scheme to continue in its current form, or whether there is another preferred method for supporting the third sector organisations in the District.

For Information & Key Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In September 2008, Thanet District Council began a review of the grants allocation system. It was decided that due to the financial climate of the time and the disproportionately high cost of administering the scheme that a new programme was required. The Community Partnership Agreement proposal was taken to the third sector for consultation and subsequently adopted by Cabinet in February 2009.
- 1.2 Rather than giving organisations a financial contribution towards their work, the Council would provide their “community partners” funding in-kind which included resources such as printing and publishing services, meeting room space and officer time for half a day per month.
- 1.3 It was decided that the 2009/10 should be a pilot year for the Community Partnership Agreement scheme and at the end of the year another consultation should take place with the third sector to gauge their views on its success.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 We currently have fourteen third sector organisations who have requested a CPA:
- Access IT Margate
 - Broadstairs Food Festival
 - Birchington Village Partnership
 - Dover & Thanet District Carers’ Support
 - East Kent Mencap
 - East Kent Relate
 - Grotto Hill Street Scheme
 - Northdown Community Project
 - Oasis
 - Pilgrims Hospice
 - Skillnet Group Margate
 - Thanet Compact
 - Thanet Fairtrade Initiative
 - Tom Thumb Theatre

It was initially stated that only six organisations would be accepted in the pilot year of the scheme but this was extended due to popularity of the programme.

- 2.2 There is currently a budget of £30,000 set aside for the Community Partnership Agreement scheme. This is to cover resources used by partnering third sector organisations such as printing, meeting room venues, and various other agreed resources. Organisations are also entitled to half a day's officer time per month, use of laptops, projectors and screens for meetings and events, plus access to the council's meeting rooms. The most popular services that have been used are the internal printing and publishing services.
- 2.3 All of the community partners' details are stored on a database within the Council, to keep a track of their nominal £1,000 budget. Except for two organisations in 2008/09 who received £2,000 budgets. These were approved and related to organisations in which there were many partners, such as the Compact. The total spend for 2009/10 was £9442.76. All CPAs were aware that their CPA had to be spent in the financial year and any unspent CPA funds cannot be carried forward.

Organisation	Amount Agreed	Amount Spent	Amount Remaining
Access IT Margate	1000	0	1000
BEST	1000	1028.80	-28.80
Birchington Village Partnership	1000	911.60	88.40
Dover & Thanet Carers' Support	1000	962.14	37.86
East Kent Relate	1000	0	1000
East Kent Mencap	1000	946.35	53.65
Grotto Hill Street Scheme	1000	33.28	966.72
Northdown Community Project	1000	427.97	572.03
Oasis	1000	819.90	180.01
Pilgrims Hospice	1000	1000	0
Skillnet	1000	658.90	341.10
Thanet Compact	2000	150.16	1849.84
Thanet Fairtrade	2000	1962.67	37.33
Tom Thumb Theatre	1000	540.99	459.01
Total	16,000	9442.76	6557.24

- 2.4 A consultation took place with all Thanet third sector during the final months of the pilot year, including with those organisations who requested a CPA, asking their opinions on the scheme. Those who received a CPA were asked to evaluate the programme and to give their thoughts on how this service might be improved. Other organisations were asked why they did not apply for a CPA, whether there were any barriers to the application, and whether there was anything that would encourage them to join the scheme. An eight week response period was given to respond to the consultation in alignment with the Thanet Compact Code of Practice on consultation.

The organisations that have not taken up on the offer of the CPA scheme have said that they felt the communication from the Council regarding the programme could have been improved and that they believed there should have been an event organised to encourage partners and that they would have liked to receive an invitation to join. This was disappointing as the

scheme was mentioned at each possible forum and has been presented on at workshops that were organised by our VCS in Thanet for the sector. There were also email alerts and details are on the Thanet Gov website.

The response received from the current community partners has been very positive with the organisations stating that they were grateful for staff input, that they had found the printing services of real value and those involved had been helpful and positive at all times with an “if we can, we will” attitude.

- 2.5 For the forthcoming year, it is suggested that the Community Partnerships Scheme is continued and more widely publicised on the Thanet Gov website, within the Thanet Matters newsletter and that there is an open event one morning for the sector to come and talk about the scheme and be invited to join. If the Council were to stop the scheme after one year there could be reputational issues, as this proposal was widely consulted on and is the main support provided by the Council in relation to ‘funds’ for the third sector. A risk to the scheme is that it becomes over-subscribed and funds will not be sufficient to provide for all those requesting a CPA. A review of the process would then be required to mitigate this risk.
- 2.6 There has also still been confusion within the sector that they are able to use this money to fund events. It was agreed by Cabinet in February 2009 that the events budget would be split from that of the small grants scheme and this needs to be made further understood by the community sector. It will also be made clear that each organisations agreement lasts only for the financial year that it is agreed in, and that organisations are invited to reapply each year, without any exceptions to this rule.
- 2.7 A proposal for the financial year 2009/10 was that Community Development offered the remaining budget as a saving. CPAs will hopefully become more popular in 2010/11 as the third sector becomes more aware of the scheme. Third sector organisations are already contacting the Council for a CPA in this financial year.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 Subject to Cabinet approval the Community Partnership Agreement scheme continues for the year 2010/11 with a further review towards the end of this financial year to see if the scheme has had an improvement in take up and any further decision can be made from this point.
- 3.2 If Cabinet decides against the continuation of the Community Partnership Scheme, there are three options:
 - 3.2.1 There would be a need for a financially centred Community Grants Policy to be written and consulted on with the third sector over a twelve week period as there is not a policy currently in place.
 - 3.2.2 An entirely new scheme for supporting the third sector in Thanet is devised and consulted upon with the third sector.
 - 3.2.3 Any support for the third sector through funding or funding in kind is stopped.

4.0 Corporate Implications

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 There are no VAT implications for the Council in its provision of “in kind” support that is given via the Community Partnership Agreements, as no services are being provided by the third sector organisations involved to the Council. This will therefore be considered as non-business supply and any related VAT costs incurred by the Council are recoverable in full.

4.2 Legal

- 4.2.1 None

4.3 Equity and Equalities

- 4.3.1 The number of beneficiaries within the District is considered as part of the application process for the Community Partnership Agreements.
- 4.3.2 All organisations who would like to become a community partners are asked to ensure that they have an up to date Equalities Policy or statement.

5.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Community Partnership Agreement programme remains in place for the year 2010/11 with the same budget as for 2009/10. A report will be provided at the end of the financial year 2010/11 to give details on improvement in the take up of the scheme by the third sector and efficiency of the scheme due to officer time constraints.

6.0 Decision Making Process

- 6.1 In the opinion of the author of this report:
 - a) The matter should be subject to a key decision.
 - b) The policy is aligned to the values in the Thanet Compact.
 - c) That any changes will be subject to consultation with the third sector.

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Background Papers

Annex A	Community Partnership Agreements Pilot Year Review – Consultation Report February 2010
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Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Sarah Martin
Legal	Peter Reilly