

Community Partnership Agreements Pilot Year Review Consultation Report February 2010

For further information please contact Sarah Phippin

01843 577092

sarah.phippin@thanet.gov.uk

Index

1. Background	Page 3
2. Methodology	Page 3
3. Responses	Page 3
4. Summary of findings	Page 3
5. Next steps	Page 3
6. Full results – Appendix A	Page 4 - 11

1. Background

In September 2008, Thanet District Council began to discuss their current grant allocation system. It was decided that due to the financial climate at that time and because the cost of administering the grant funding was disproportionate to the funds that were available, a new scheme was needed.

Later that month, Cllr Jo Gideon presented the draft policy on Community Partnership Agreements at the Thanet Voluntary and Community Sector Forum to begin the consultation process. At the Forum, questionnaires were given out and there was also a “breakout” session with Cllr Gideon for any initial questions to be answered. Following this presentation, further consultation took place by sending a copy of the draft policy with a feedback form to any organisation that had received a grant from the Council in the last three years, and any organisation that had specifically asked to be involved.

All of the documents were sent via post and were also available upon request from Sarah Phippin. The consultation was also widely advertised on the Thanet District Council website, by the Thanet Voluntary and Community Sector Forum and also via the CASE Kent newsletter. The consultation response time was given eight weeks in accordance with the Thanet Compact Code of Practice on Consultation.

At the close of the consultation period, 19.4% of the feedback forms had been returned and a comprehensive report was written fully answering any questions that organisations has posed. This report was available through the Thanet District Council website, CASE Kent, the Thanet Voluntary and Community Sector Forum and from Sarah Phippin in the Corporate Projects team. On the whole, the feedback was very positive from all of the organisations involved, with the majority of organisations understanding the limitations in the Council's financial resources at that time and stating that the resources that were provisionally offered would be of use to them. The consultation was considered to be clear and concise to those that had taken part and after evaluating the responses that had been received the policy was refined and adapted to be inclusive of the comments that had been made.

The revised policy and a supporting paper were taken to Cabinet in February 2009 and they adopted the procedure. The Community Partnership Agreements began on the 1st April 2009. Each agreement was determined to last of the financial year that it was approved in.

The Community Partnership Agreements offer organisations access to resources including funding support via the Grant Net system on the Thanet District Council Community Portal, the provision of meeting room space and use of necessary equipment, help form in-house teams with printing and publishing and a named Thanet District Council officer for half a day per month.

The agreements were designed with the Thanet Compact's principles in mind and the Council believe that the scheme embodies the values of the Compact. The purpose of the Community Partnership Scheme are to show the third sector within Thanet our commitment to them and outwardly recognise their value as equal partners, to strengthen greater cohesion with the sector, to strengthen Council commitment to vulnerable groups, to give greater sustainability to the third sector and to operate a fair criteria based process based upon logical, transparent methodology. It was decided that as it would be quite a change, it would be piloted in the first year (ending on the 31st March 2010), with a review taking place after the first year to gage interest and successes.

There is currently £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 space and various agreed resources, such as the hire of a community or event venue (within their budget). Organisations are also entitled to half a day's officer time per month, use of resources

1. Background cont....

such as laptops, projectors and screens and access to the council's meeting rooms in addition to this. The most popular service that has been used is the internal printing and publishing services.

All of the community partners' details are stored on a database within the Council, to keep a track of their nominal £1,000 budget and other resources that they have used as part of the scheme. In 2008/09 there was an overall spend of £9,442.76.

The 2008/09 partners were:

- Access IT Margate;
- Broadstairs Event Support Trust on behalf of Broadstairs Food Festival;
- Birchington Village Partnership;
- Dover District Carers' Support;
- East Kent Mencap;
- East Kent Relate;
- Grotto Hill Street Scheme;
- Northdown Community Project;
- Pilgrims Hospice;
- Oasis;
- Skillnet Group Margate;
- Thanet Compact;
- Thanet Fairtrade Initiative;
- Tom Thumb Theatre.

2. Methodology

In November 2009 all Community Partners and the whole of the third sector in Thanet were contacted either by post or by email asking their opinion on the Thanet District Council Community Partnership Agreement Scheme.

Current community partners were asked to evaluate the programme and to give their thoughts on how it may be able to be improved. Those organisations who have not come forward were asked why this was, whether there were any barriers and what Thanet District Council could do to encourage them to join up to 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.

3. Responses

5.5% of the consultation forms were returned.

4. Summary of findings

- Not advertised enough externally.
- Not heard of the scheme.
- Would like to be invited to join the scheme.
- Have not received enough information.
- Disappointing there was a limit on the amount of groups in the pilot year.
- There should be a TDC meeting with the third sector to talk about the scheme and invite them to join.

4. Summary of findings cont....

- We feel we misunderstood what was initially being offered and what was agreed initially.
- We were disappointed when we were unable to get a Community Partnership Agreement.
- We would like to be sent more information regarding the scheme.
- We felt that it would not benefit our organization as we do not really need the kind of support that would be available.
- We would like to still be able to apply for grants.
- We aren't sure what a Community Partnership Agreement is.
- WE wouldn't want one as no rate discount is given.

5. What our Community Partners said....

- We have been grateful for the staff input and helpfulness when we were seeking to re-locate.
- We don't think any changes are required to the scheme.
- The printing of the flyer and the program was of real value for which we are grateful.
- We were an early partner and the offering and attitude seemed to change when the new officer joined the scheme. They were very helpful and positive at all times with an "if we can we will" attitude.
- The help of the council officers has been invaluable to my organisation in helping it develop and establish; specifically the Community Development Officer who has provided us with help, support and advice as well as representing our organisation to others.
- This funding is a useful resource to us at a vital time when revenue is low but the need for communication with our clients is high.
- It would be great to see a wider level of participation and communication between different council departments.
- The scheme is excellent from a participating organisation's point of view, but maybe not widely advertised in the community.
- The help of the officers has been fantastic, and the help I have received from Gill Shepherd and Wendy Morris has been invaluable.

6. Next Steps

- The results of the consultation report will be available via the Community Development department and on the Thanet District Council website.
- This report and a supporting paper will be sent for as a key decision to Cabinet in March 2010.
- If the Cabinet decide not to continue with the Community Partnership Scheme, they will be asked to consider what action they would like to take in their support of the third sector in Thanet; this decision will be relayed to the third sector as soon as is possible.
- If the scheme is repeated for the financial year 2010/11 there will be a further push on advertising the programme and communicating it with the third sector through various routes.
- It needs to be made clear that the Community Partnership Agreement is not meant for events. It is only for community organisations in order to aid their sustainability, not pay for a project or event that they would like to do.
- Staff need to be aware of the scheme and it would be useful if they could come forward if they have a particular interest in helping the third sector.

Full results - Appendix A

Organisations that responded to consultation:

438 (Thanet) Squadron Air Training Corps	Pilgrims Hospice
Access IT Margate	Ramsgate Operatic Society
Age Concern Broadstairs & St Peters	Ramsgate Youth & Community Centre/Concorde
Aztec Keep Fit and Dance Studio	Red Arrow Club
Broadstairs Food Festival	Relate East Kent
Broadstairs Open Bowls Tournament	Stoneless Golf Club
Cliffsend Gardening Club	Thanet Bowls Club (Ladies Section)
Cliffsend Village Hall	Thanet & District Netball League
CROP Citizens Advice for Older People	Thanet Festival Choir
Dane Area Action Group	Thanet Judokwai
E.K. Blood Trust	Thanet Senior Citizens Forum
Enterprising Opportunities CIC	The Salvation Army
Home-Start Thanet	
League of Friends QEQM Hospital	
Margate Amateur Football Club	
Margate Lawn Tennis Club	
Pie Factory Music	