

POLICY AND RESOURCES

CABINET BOARD

1ST APRIL 2010

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY
P. GRAHAM**

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1 COMMUNITY SAFETY PROJECTS FUND: APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

Purpose of the Report:

To decide upon applications received for grant funding from Community and Voluntary Organisations and from the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership.

Background:

Introduction

Since 2000/2001 the Council has provided financial assistance to community-based and voluntary organisations to fund projects and schemes, which are designed to contribute towards the objectives of the Community Safety Strategy. The Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership also develops projects for the same purpose. The combined budget for these purposes for 2009/10 is £20,000.

The Process

Grant application forms are available from the Council's Community Safety Team which offers advice and guidance to applicants on the eligibility criteria and completion of the application form. Applications are assessed against the eligibility criteria prior to the application being reported to the Cabinet Board for determination. Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership submissions are agreed between the relevant partners prior to be presented for decision. For information, projects approved during 2009/10 to date are set out in Appendix 1.

Submitted Applications

The following applications have been received since my last report.

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Grant</u>
1. Giant Grave Boys & Girls Club	Equipment	£ 378.50

The Club is seeking funding to purchase equipment. The club's sports hall is used for a variety of community activities including football training. Over the years the 20 fluorescent tubes providing lighting to the hall have been damaged and now only 5 are working leaving the hall with poor lighting.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Projects approved during 2009/10.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the applications be approved.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The applications recommended for approval meet the eligibility criteria and the projects will contribute to the objectives of the Community Safety Strategy.

List of Background Papers:

Eligibility criteria and application forms.

Wards Affected:

All wards

Valleys Strategy:

All valleys

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COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

1 COMMUNITY SAFETY PROJECTS FUND: APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

(a) Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call-in period.

(b) Sustainability Appraisal:

Community Plan Impacts

Economic Prosperity	-	positive impacts
Education & Lifelong Learning	-	positive impacts
Better Health & Well Being	-	positive impacts
Environment & Transport	-	no impact
Crime & Disorder	-	positive impacts

Other Impacts

Welsh Language	-	no impact
Sustainable Development	-	no impact
Equalities	-	positive impacts
Social Inclusion	-	positive impacts

(c) Consultation

There has been no requirement under the constitution for external consultation on this item.

2009/10**COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS**

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Area of Benefit</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Approved</u>
The Barn Project	Briton Ferry	£ 500.00	02/07/09
Boxing Club	Sandfields & Baglan	£ 500.00	13/08/09
Girls Football Team	Cwmavon	£ 500.00	13/08/09
Rugby League Junior Section	County Borough	£ 500.00	13/08/09
Taibach Boxing Club	Taibach	£ 500.00	24/09/09
Under 14's AFC Team	Onllywn	£ 500.00	24/09/09
PT Town Cricket Club	County Borough	£ 500.00	05/11/09
TDM Dance Academy	Upper Afan Valley	£ 500.00	05/11/09
Neath & Melyn Boxing Club	Neath & Melyn	£ 492.99	17/02/10
Fairfield Boxing Club	Aberavon and Sandfields	£ 500.00	17/02/10
Cwmavon RFC	Cwmavon	£ 500.00	17/02/10
Resolven Cricket Club	Resolven	£ 500.00	17/02/10

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION PROJECTS

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Area of Benefit</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Approved</u>
Cyber Café	Cwmllynfell	£ 1000.00	13/08/09
Pontardawe Air Cadets	Pontardawe	£ 1000.00	05/11/09
Neath Afan Gymnastics Club	County Borough	£ 1000.00	05/11/09
Tawe Angling Club	County Borough	£ 1000.00	05/11/09
Skewen Cricket Club	Skewen	£1,000.00	17/02/10

SAFER NEATH PORT TALBOT PROJECTS

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Area of Benefit</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Approved</u>
Fire precaution logbooks	County Borough	£ 840.00	13/08/09
Ariel Cowboys	County Borough	£ 1679.00	13/08/09
PPO Beneficiary Fund	County Borough	£ 2500.00	13/08/09

Total for 2009/10		<u>£ 16,011.99</u>	
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2 CITIZENS' PANEL CONSULTATION

Purpose of Report

To report on the key findings of the Citizens' Panel consultation exercise conducted between October and November 2009 and outline how the findings will be used.

Background

BMG Research has been engaged by the Council to manage the Citizens' Panel, providing consultation on County Borough wide issues with a representative sample of the local resident population. Questionnaires were distributed to all 1,200 Panel members seeking their views on a variety of issues. In total 714 responded, yielding a response rate of 60%.

The following sections provide an executive summary of the key findings. A more detailed report of the findings is available in the Member's Room.

Communications and Elections

Panellists were asked to specify the methods by which they find out about the Council's services and activities. By far the most commonly utilised is leaflets/posters/brochures (72%), followed by friends and family (41%).

A similar question was asked on how respondents would prefer to find out information about the Council's services and activities and they were given the same list of options. Encouragingly, the preferred method of finding out information was in line with the most commonly used methods (leaflets, posters and brochures 68%).

The Council actively promoted the European Parliamentary Election 2009 through a range of methods. Respondents were asked whether they had seen or heard any information regarding the Election prior to polling day on Thursday 4th June 2009. There was a mixed response, with 54% indicating they had. Of those respondents that had seen or heard information, around half of respondents had seen TV adverts or press articles. From a local perspective over a third had seen Council publications, such as Community Spirit newspaper.

Taking the same list of methods, the respondents were then asked to rate the extent to which each was helpful in providing information.

Encouragingly, Council publications are deemed one of the most helpful, with 68% of respondents giving this response. This is only just behind press articles more generally, at 70%. Other methods gaining praise for their effectiveness are TV (62%) and radio adverts (60%).

Approaching three quarters (71%) of respondents state they have access to the Internet. It was found that Google is by far the most commonly used website to find out information generally. It was also noted that 50% of respondents with access to the internet also use the Council's website to find out information.

Radio Wales/Cymru is the most commonly listened to local station at 29%, followed by the Wave (24%). Regarding local newspapers, 40% read the South Wales Evening Post, whilst a further 28% read Community Spirit.

What use will be made of the findings?

- The findings show how residents like to receive information from the Council. They demonstrate the effectiveness of the Council's communications and will help plan delivery of key messages and guide campaigns for the Council and/or partners.
- The Citizens' Panel evaluation exercise acts as an invaluable tool in assisting the Returning Officer to access grant funding from the Electoral Participation Fund administered by the Ministry of Justice. The grant funding is available to assist with targeted advertising and outreach activities to try and encourage different groups of electors to engage with the democratic process as well as providing them with key information on the run up to a major election.
- As part of the application process to receive this funding there is a requirement following the conclusion of each election period to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities undertaken. In this regard the Citizens' Panel acts as a useful forum to obtain vital feedback from electors to comply with the grant funding rules as well as allowing future engagement work to be refined and improved as necessary.

Community Spirit Newspaper

78% of respondents recall receiving a copy of Community Spirit in the past 12 months. These Panel Members were asked to indicate whether they relied on the newspaper to obtain information about the services provided by the Council and its partners. The largest proportion rely on the newspaper to gain information about the Council (76%), followed by the Police (68%) and Communities First (57%).

In order to ensure the newspaper is fit for purpose the respondents were asked to rate the extent to which a range of features of the publication are good or poor. The greatest praise is given to how clear it is to understand (77%), followed by 71% indicating the pictures are good.

Panellists were asked what changes they would like to see to Community Spirit newspaper. Over three quarters (77%) of respondents wish to see more information on events happening in the area, whilst a similar proportion states more information on services in the area (73%).

What use will be made of the findings?

- The findings are invaluable as a benchmarking survey. It shows how well Community Spirit is received and its effectiveness as a communications tool, allowing the Communications and Marketing Team to plan the delivery of key messages effectively.
- It is also invaluable to be able to show partners how effective Community Spirit is in getting important messages across about essential services and, importantly, how cost effective this method of communication is. The results inform us that this is how residents like to receive information regarding not only Council services but also those provided by partners.

Language and Format

In addition to the Council's standard methods of providing information, it also provides a range of other formats where required, such as large print, Braille, tape and CD. Just 17 respondents have tried to acquire information in other formats, of which the most common was large print.

67% of Panellists have contacted the Council in the last 12 months. The majority used the telephone to get in touch with the Council, followed by in person. Almost all respondents communicated in English (99%), whilst 1% did so in Welsh. Levels of satisfaction with the Council's ability to communicate in the preferred language are high at 91%, with 68% feeling very satisfied.

Panellists were asked whether the Council does enough to promote Welsh language and culture and encouragingly 81% feel that they do. Respondents were asked to give their views of Welsh language or bilingual school provision in the County Borough and 73% feel there is enough provision. Amongst those that feel there is not enough provision over three quarters specify this is for both primary and secondary schools.

What use will be made of the findings?

- Although no firm conclusions can be drawn due to the small sample sizes, the findings will be used to inform service delivery in terms of the Welsh Language Scheme and the Disability Equalities Strategy. It will also assist the Corporate Strategy Team with the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of such policies.
- The results have also been distributed across Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning services. The information on Welsh language provision will be particularly informative in terms of the School Improvement Programme and planning future education provision within the County Borough.

Local Development Plan

This part of the survey built upon questions asked in the May 2009 survey to inform the Local Development Plan. This section was split into the following topics:

- Population – Panellists were asked to what extent they felt population growth in Neath Port Talbot is a good thing. There are mixed views, with 31% feeling it is a good thing and 32% that it is a bad thing. A similar proportion is undecided and state they neither agree nor disagree (37%).

- Employment – Panellists were asked to choose up to two options that they felt would increase employment in the area. By far the largest proportion chose skills and training programmes to meet the needs of key industrial sectors (61%). This is followed by a wide range of available business sites and premises throughout the County Borough (36%) and a better public transport infrastructure (34%).
- Transport – The majority of respondents agree that increasing emphasis should be placed on improving the use of trains and buses and facilities for walking and cycling for everyday needs (93%). 59% of respondents feel public transport is the top priority followed by improving the streets and pavements for pedestrians (31%). Over a quarter also see more walking/cycling routes for everyday use and community transport schemes as a priority.

Panellists were asked what they see as the main barriers to using public transport. Over half of the respondents state that limited services and the availability and frequency of public transport during evenings and weekends as the main barriers. A further two in five chose a lack of suitable routes and connections (42%) and value for money (41%) as potential barriers.

- Health and Well being – The three top priorities chosen by respondents for improving health and well being in the County Borough are better access to affordable leisure facilities (34%), more access to health checks (25%) and better access to local primary care services (22%). The top priority for the future of leisure facilities is to provide more affordable facilities (33%). A further quarter (25%) chose better promotion of activities going on in these facilities and 18% wish to see improvements made to existing facilities.
- Green Spaces – Respondents were asked, on average, how often they visit local parks/open green spaces. It is immediately apparent that usage is very high, with 92% visiting a park or open space in the last year and 60% visiting at least weekly. Currently distances between respondent's homes and the nearest park or open space are in line with preferences. It is clear that parks and open spaces are easily accessible to the majority of residents and usage is common and frequent.

Respondents were asked to choose their one priority for the future of parks and open spaces as a means of continuing to develop the provision. The priority, amongst almost a third (31%) is to retain existing open space/parks, whilst 18% select improve existing open green spaces and 16% to provide more parks/open green spaces.

What use will be made of the findings?

- The Citizens' Panel provides a very useful input to the suite of engagement exercises that the Council is undertaking during the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP). It provides a rare resource to engage with the often unheard majority of the population.
- Much of the engagement on the Plan is dominated by people and groups seeking to address single issues while the Panel provides an opportunity to engage on a wide range of issues. The LDP team have used the Panel on a number of occasions to research issues and in the latest survey the opportunity was taken to build on the responses to the previous survey and explore the reasons underpinning the findings.

List of Background Papers

None

Appendices

None – but note that more detailed report of the findings is available in the Member's Room and copies can be acquired from the Corporate Strategy Team.

Wards Affected

All

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