

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE



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PORTFOLIO	Leader / Customer Access and Community Engagement
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PROPOSALS FOR USE OF CONNECTING COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

PURPOSE

1. To seek approval to run a 'Connecting Communities' programme in the borough.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That Members agree that the Council accepts a one off allocation of £ 60 000 'Connecting Communities' funding through Government Office, and runs a programme in line with the criteria for the funding. The key aims of the local programme would be to make sustainable improvements to a range of services in the Padiham area, and to improve the extent to which elected representatives and local residents are able to influence and inform decision making about services in the area.
3. That a budget of £80 000 be established for the proposed programme, and that responsibility for determining and implementing the details of the programme, including the establishment of a temporary post of Connecting Communities Officer (which will be subject to job evaluation), to be funded from the agreed budget, is delegated to the Head of Corporate Engagement and Cohesion, on the basis of ongoing consultation with the Executive Member for Customer Access and Community Engagement.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

4. In order to bring available programme funds into the borough, and to use them in line with the Council's existing commitments to improve services and community engagement, and drive up performance against key National Indicators.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

5. Burnley is positioned so as to be able to participate in a programme called

'Connecting Communities', being rolled out through Government Office – a Department of Communities and Local Government initiative.

It is intended to '*support national PSA 21 – building more cohesive, empowered and active communities*'. Work funded through the programme should take place in the areas of 'leadership'; 'giving people a voice'; and 'increased opportunities'.

5. The resources available to the borough of Burnley through participation in this programme will be a one off allocation to the value of around £ 60 k in revenue funding. Subject to the final sign off by Government Office of an agreed action plan and proposal, these funds will be allocated this month, with spending to take place during 2010. There will also be additional 'in kind' support, e.g. from Local Improvement Advisors, and through participation in regional training opportunities.
6. The action plan to be finalised will set out a series of task and finish actions as follows, in line with the terms of the Programme. These will include:
 - Work to gather information about services delivered in Padiham by a range of public sector organisations, including Burnley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, the Police and others.
 - Work to gather information about opportunities for resident involvement in decision making in Padiham.
 - Consideration of that information by elected representatives, resident representatives and agencies.
 - Consideration of opportunities for improvements to services which are within mainstream capacity and are sustainable.
 - Training to be offered to resident representatives, elected representatives and agencies.
 - Action planning to improve services and involvement in decision-making.
 - Development of links and context to the borough as a whole, to Pennine Lancashire, and to the wider North West region.
 - Quick win activities including through some 'oil the wheel' money (a small 'service improvement fund') for one off processes and investments to improve services on a sustainable basis. These will have a visible and noticeable impact on the quality of life in the Padiham area.
 - Communications activity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

7. The total cost of the programme will be 80k.

This will break down as follows:

- 25 k for additional staffing resources, including all on costs – officer/s to carry out baseline research, facilitate partnership workshops, liaison meetings and workshops with residents, elected representatives, service providers, and to develop, consult on and implement agreed actions.
 - 25 k for a service improvement fund
 - 7 k for a local training and facilitation budget, to include good relations work (in addition to regional in kind training support)
 - 10 k for training inputs and development activities (through the regional in kind allocation)
 - 8 k of management input (including through in kind support from existing allocations)
 - 5 k for publicity and communications
8. The proposed programme would be funded from government grant, directly in terms of 60k new Connecting Communities programme allocation, 5k Area Based Grant activity on cohesion (already available to the Council) and in kind support to the value of 10k from regional allocation (to be drawn down as part of the Connecting Communities programme). Some staffing time would be allocated to the programme from existing Council resources (time of the Head of Corporate Engagement and Cohesion, and related administrative capacity, to the value of £ 5k). Other on costs would be covered within programme funds.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

9. The proposed programme would implement agreed Council and partnership policy, in line with government funding requirements, and focus on a part of the borough where previous similar Area Based Initiatives have not been possible because of funding rules.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

10. Initial consultation has taken place with Burnley Borough Council Executive Members; Ward Members for the wards covering Padiham (Gawthorpe and Hapton with Park); Management Team; Heads of Service; Corporate Policy Officer; Corporate Engagement Officer; Communications Manager; Principal Personnel Officer.

The details of the programme will be developed in ongoing consultation with relevant ward Members; Padiham Town Council; Council officers as appropriate; representatives of other agencies as appropriate; residents of Padiham.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

11. Papers on Connecting Communities programme held by Mike Waite.

FURTHER INFORMATION**PLEASE CONTACT:****Mike Waite (01282) 477127****ALSO:**