

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND 2005 – 2006

REPORT TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the programme of expenditure for the remaining Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) to be allocated for 2005-06.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 NRF is money made available to selected local authorities for tackling deprivation in the most deprived areas. The amount of money depends on the level of deprivation as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation at the ward level.

- 2.2 The fund was set up in 2001 and was intended to run for 3 years until March 2004 and was extended for a further 2 years until March 2006. There are 3 main conditions to the spending of the fund:

- That the programme of expenditure is agreed by the Local Strategic Partnership (Dudley Community Partnership);
- That the Local Strategic Partnership remains accredited by the Government;
- That the programme is based on the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy which was reviewed in 2003 and reported to the Executive in July 2003.

- 2.3 The purpose of the NRF is to improve mainstream services in the most deprived areas to help increase employment and economic performance, reduce crime, achieve better educational attainment, improve health and provide better housing. This is not permanent money and the projects need to be sustainable beyond 2006 through other money or have contributed to narrowing the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the borough as a time-limited project.

- 2.4 In March 2004 the Cabinet noted the Dudley Community Partnership's full programme of expenditure for 2004/5 and a partial programme for 2005/6. For 2005/6, as in 2004/5, we have an allocation of £1,521,000 NRF, of which £1,149,000 was pre allocated last year, leaving an amount of £372,000 which is the subject of this report.

- 2.5 New projects for 2004 - 2006 were based on a commissioning approach by the Dudley Community Partnership and its constituent theme partnerships to target areas of spend more directly related to the identification of the priorities for tackling areas of poor performance locally. These priorities were based on the following:

- The gaps identified in the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy where Dudley is below average in terms of deprivation measures.
- Support for the achievement of Local Public Service Agreement targets where they relate to issues of deprivation.
- Proposals put forward through the Theme Partnerships of the DCP as their key areas for action. These were separately assessed using an appraisal model to measure their fit to the requirements of the NRF
- The priorities identified by the Community Partnership itself at their Away Days in October 2003.

2.6 The schemes selected for allocation of the £372,000 were considered and agreed by Dudley Community Partnership Executive on 23rd November 2004, and this report brings the programme to the Council, as the accountable body for NRF, for confirmation

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The proposed programme of expenditure for the remaining NRF for 2005-6 is set out in the Appendix to this report. Brief descriptions of the potential projects are included along with the proposed allocation for each. All projects have been planned on the basis that NRF funding will cease in March 2006 (see 4.1 below), and where appropriate are planning continuation strategies.

4.0 Finance

4.1 The Council has been allocated £1,521,000 for the NRF in 2005-06. All the money in the current financial year is expected to be spent so there will be no carry-over of expenditure to augment the allocation. At present it must be assumed that NRF will cease in March 2006, although a formal announcement regarding this is likely at some point in the next 4 months. We have contacted the ODPM to impress upon them the importance of the earliest possible announcement to facilitate our planning.

4.2 The NRF can be spent on both capital and revenue expenditure. The programme for 2005-6 as set out in the Appendix comprises proposals for £322,000 of revenue expenditure and £50,000 of capital expenditure. The capital expenditure should be included in the Council's Capital Programme.

5.0 Legal

5.1 Special grants paid to the Council for neighbourhood renewal and the conditions for payment of that grant are set out under section 88B of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

5.2 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate of which is conducive to or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

5.3 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which is likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area.

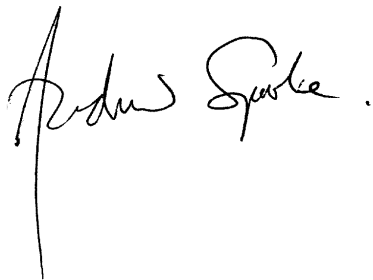
6.0 Equal Opportunities

6.1 The distribution of the fund directly addresses the priorities in the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and specifically tackles deprivation in the most deprived areas, and support projects which are helping vulnerable people and helping to improve services in relation to jobs, health, education, safety and the environment.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Cabinet are requested to note the decisions of the Dudley Community Partnership in relation to :

1. The programme of expenditure as set out in Appendix 1
2. The inclusion of expenditure in the Council's Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 4.2



Chief Executive

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Background Papers:

- Report of the Chief Executive to the Executive, 17th March 2004
- Report of the Chief Executive of Dudley MBC to Dudley Community Partnership Executive, 23rd November 2004

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND
PROPOSED ADDITIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2005/6

PROJECT	AWARD £
<p>1. Inspire Project Enabling 1000 parents/carers and children to attend workshops so that schools can work in partnership with parents to raise levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy for our most disadvantaged residents.</p>	13,000
<p>2. Library ICT Skills The Library Service now has PCs in 18 libraries and an LPSA target to deliver basic skills courses in ICT. The target is unlikely to be delivered unless links are made to enable residents of disadvantaged areas to use the service. An outreach officer will work until March 2006 to promote and develop the service.</p>	16,000
<p>3. Health Through Warmth This project has been developed to address fuel poverty issues with disadvantaged households and will provide a worker to increase the number of referrals to the scheme by health professionals.</p>	16,000
<p>4. Home check Home Safety To reduce the risk of serious accidents in the home by improving the safety of the living environment for children in the most vulnerable families. This will be done by the provision of essential safety equipment and by raising awareness of accident prevention.</p>	10,000
<p>5. Drug Liaison Support A social worker to provide a link between drug treatment services and social services for children and families, providing information and advice on support and prevention of drug related problems. A midwife to increase the early engagement of drug services by pregnant women and help integrate care pathways between maternity and drug services.</p>	80,000
<p>6. DFTRA To provide continued support for the development of Dudley Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations. This enables the Federation to develop policies and practices, identify and promote residents' and tenants' needs, develop business plans, increase capacity, and ensure effective communication.</p>	25,000
<p>7. Netherton Regeneration Centre The project addresses the lack of facilities in the Borough's 3rd most deprived ward, and this will help meet building costs.</p>	50,000
<p>8. Improving Maternity Services The reduction of perinatal mortality by ensuring that women in our most deprived communities are targeted to ensure that they have access to the same levels of specialist care as the population at large.</p>	80,000

PROJECT	AWARD £
<p>9. Children's' Centres To provide centres in Castle & Priory ward as hubs within the community for parents and providers of childcare services for children of all ages. Providing holistic support for children's development, support for families with young children, and to facilitate return to work for employed parents by providing childminder networks and links to day care provision.</p>	40,000
<p>10. Speech & Language Services Carrying out of research to enable the targeted use of resources for a speech and language therapy service which will improve access to the curriculum and thereby levels of achievement for BME students, those from deprived areas and those with special needs.</p>	42,000
TOTAL	372,000