PARISH GRANT SCHEME TO REDUCE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

CABINET: 26 JUNE 2003

MEMBER REPORTING: COUNCILLOR WERNER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider details of a new grant scheme for Parishes that is intended to address anti-social behaviour across the Royal Borough, and seek a contribution from the Council’s ‘Assistance to Parishes’ scheme towards the initiative.

2. MEMBER’S RECOMMENDATION: That the new Parish grant initiative be supported and £15k be contributed from the ‘Assistance to Parishes’ scheme to help fund the project in year one with a further contribution in the following 2 years of the scheme, if it can be demonstrated that the scheme has reduced anti-social behaviour in this first pilot year.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Anti-social behaviour is being seen by communities across the country as a problem. The government recently published a White Paper to address the issue in March 2003.

The Community Safety Partnership has been working on a project called CADIS - Community Nuisance and Disorder Information System - to extract information on community nuisance and disorder, to analyse the data and map it on GIS for use as a problem-solving tool to assist partnership agencies in developing collaborative strategies to address anti-social behaviour and nuisance.

The Council has defined anti-social behaviour as ‘behaviour that is causing, or likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.’ The categories that are included in this definition of anti-social behaviour under CADIS are: Adult nuisance/disorder; abandoned vehicles; arson, assault, bus shelter; child nuisance/disorder, criminal damage; dangerous driving; drugs; fight, fire; firearm; fly tipping; graffiti, harassment; indecency; indecent exposure; hoax calls, malicious calls; malicious mail; noise/nuisance; nuisance/disorder; road hazard; robbery; substance; suspicious circumstances; suspicious persons; threats; traffic; travellers; weapons; youth nuisance/disorder.

Incidence of anti-social behaviour (monitored through CADIS)

CADIS uses records from the police crime recording system. All incidents reported by the public are recorded centrally and acted upon. Those that are deemed to be criminal are taken off the system. CADIS analyses incidents remaining on the system after 3 months that have not been ‘crimed.’ It was discovered that incidents of anti-social behaviour were higher than suspected. Thus far, an analysis of the figures in the three summer months from 2000 to 2002 show a fairly consistent level of recorded anti-social behaviour incidents of about 3000 a month and
anecdotal evidence suggests that antisocial behaviour is becoming a growing problem in community life. Analysis for the months of July to September for the last 3 years shows the following results:

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<th>July to September 2000</th>
<th>July to September 2001</th>
<th>July to September 2002</th>
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<tr>
<td>2968</td>
<td>3158</td>
<td>3017</td>
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LPSA target

The LPSA target is to reduce anti-social behaviour by 5% on the CADIS 2002 figures by September 2006 and one of the ways in which this can be achieved is to work with Parish Councils to reduce anti-social behaviour in their area.

How the scheme evolved

The scheme developed out of a series of conversations the LSP team had with Parish Councils in the early part of this year. Many parishes were frustrated that simple projects requiring a small amount of joint funding seemed to take a long time to get off the ground.

For example, in Old Windsor, a project to provide road humps in a local car park to prevent joy riding had begun over 8 months previously and funding had still not been secured – even though the Parish Council was prepared to part fund the project from its own resources. Through the intervention of the LSP - the police, Council, Community Safety Partnership were all alerted to the problem and funding was guaranteed within a week. The project was completed by March 2003.

Partners in the LSP discussed the example and recognised a number of key learning points. For the LSP to be successful it needs to think strategically, but act locally. It needs to intervene in local problems that involve more than one agency. The LSP also recognised that Parish Councils in the Royal Borough can play a key role in this matter. Their knowledge of the local area and its communities is a very valuable resource that should be better used by the LSP. In relation to anti-social behaviour, Parish Councils are in an ideal position to:

- Identify local hot-spots and ASB issues for their community
- part fund local schemes to address anti-social behaviour problems in their own area, with help from the LSP
- consult with local people to prioritise activities to reduce anti-social behaviour problems in their communities

The Community Safety Partnership offered £15k for 2003/4 and 2004/05 to set up a project to see if Parish Councils can make a difference to recorded levels of anti-social behaviour in their local areas. The Cabinet Office, which already administers the Revenue and capital grant schemes, will administer the grant scheme. The Police volunteered the use of CADIS to help Parish Councils identify the recorded anti-social behaviour activities in their locality and monitor the results after any projects have been introduced to see how effective they have been.
Discussions with officers who administer the Council’s ‘Assistance to Parishes’ scheme suggest that some underspend in last year’s budget could be added to the central pot to enable more projects to be undertaken by Parish Councils in the coming year.

How the scheme will work

Parishes will be invited to take part in the scheme through a letter from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Partnerships.

The LSP will part fund a grant scheme to Parish Councils. Small grants up to £1,000 will be offered to each Parish Council, as long as they part fund the project and work with at least 2 partners of the LSP to deliver the project. The money grant must be spent by end of March 2004, or the Home Office will reclaim its share under community safety rules.

A simple grant form and information on the objectives and rules of the scheme will be sent to all Parishes in late June and invitations to take part requested from the end of August 2003. Officers from the Community Safety Partnership will work with Parishes to analyse the existing information on anti-social behaviour as recorded by CADIS and other sources. A sub-group of the LSP officers will be charged with allocating the funding to the projects from September and progress will be monitored through the LSP. At the end of the first year a case studies report will be produced for the LSP showing which schemes worked and examining the reasons for success and failure.

Examples of the types of projects that the scheme could fund will be supplied as part of the background information. This is not intended to be prescriptive – but advisory. If Parish Councils suggest other projects that can address anti-social behaviour, the partnership will be happy to consider them. Typically ASB includes any of the following:

- harassment and intimidating behaviour
- behaviour that creates alarm
- noisy neighbours
- drunken or abusive behaviour
- vandalism, graffiti, and other deliberate damage to property
- dumping rubbish or litter

3.1 Wards Affected

15 wards that have Parish Councils are eligible to apply for the scheme. These are: Bisham; Bray; Cookham; Cox Green; Datchet; Horton; Hurley; Old Windsor; Shottesbrooke; Sunningdale; Sunninghill; Waltham St Lawrence; White Waltham; Wraysbury; Eton Town Council.

Unparished areas of the Borough also receive funding from community safety streams to address crime reduction. Additional CCTV cameras in town centres, and the two skate parks in Windsor and Maidenhead are examples. Whilst this scheme is initially only open to Parish Councils, if the project is successful and can demonstrate a reduction in anti-social behaviour as a result of the schemes
implemented in year one, the LSP will consider how it might be extended to other
groups in the future - eg community groups, resident and tenants groups.

3.2 Relevant Matters Upon Which Decision is Based

3.3 Options Available

Members can agree or not agree to support the pilot project.

3.4 Reasons Supporting Recommendation

Supporting this project that has been agreed by the LSP and the Community Safety
Partnership will demonstrate the Council’s commitment to involving Royal
Borough Parishes in a multi-agency partnership project to reduce anti-social
behaviour in their local areas. The project also supports the manifesto commitment
of ‘working with the police and local residents to clamp down on anti-social
behaviour, crime and the fear of crime’.

3.5 Relevant National/Regional Guidance

The government published a white paper on anti-social behaviour in March 2003.
Called ‘Respect and Responsibility – taking a stand against anti-social behaviour’,
the white paper details the actions the government would like to see happen to
reduce anti-social behaviour. One chapter is headed ‘Local Problem, Local Action
and suggests ways in which partnerships should work together to address anti-
social behaviour. To them effective local action requires:

- clear local leadership through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
- clear local standards on the types of anti-social behaviour the will not be
tolerated
- support from local people
- an understanding that local councils, and other local agencies must be
accountable for dealing with anti-social behaviour

This project will help demonstrate the commitment to addressing and reducing
behaviour that local people identify as anti-social behaviour, with the help of local
people.

3.6 Relevant Council Policies/Strategies

This proposal supports the community strategy key themes ‘being safe and secure’
by addressing the concerns of local people on anti-social behaviour problems

The Community Strategy themes of ‘involving people’ and ‘working together’ will
both be demonstrated by this project. Parish Councils will have to ‘involve’ local
people to identify anti-social behaviour and set up projects to address the issues
raised. The Council, Parish Councils and other partners in the LSP will be 'working
together' to reduce anti-social behaviour.
The project will also contribute to the Community Safety Strategy and support many of its key priorities including ‘tackling crime’ reducing crime and the fear of crime.

The project also contributes to one of the Council’s PSA themes – to improve the quality of life for local people by reducing anti-social behaviour.

4. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

(a) Reducing anti-social behaviour was adopted by the LSP on 18 February 2003. It agreed to ‘own’ one of the targets – to improve the quality of life for local communities by reducing anti-social behaviour – and involve as many LSP partners as possible in its delivery.

(b) The project to reduce anti-social behaviour was supported by the Police, Health and others in the community safety partnership. The group received a report to their meeting on 11 March 2003 and endorsed the targets relating to crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour.

(c) Parishes at the last Parish Council supported concept of developing a scheme such as this to address local issues. Individual parishes supported the idea of addressing crime in their local patch during a round of presentations on the work of the LSP.

(d) A letter from the LSP detailing the outline proposals of the scheme was sent out in May and initial responses are encouraging.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

The Community Safety Strategy Group has already committed £15k per year for the next two years to launch the scheme. It is suggested that a further contribution from the Council of £15k this year will help to fund additional projects at Parish level and so demonstrate the Council’s commitment to work with local people to address anti-social behaviour. This £15k is available from an underspend in the ‘Assistance to Parishes’ last year.

5.2 Legal

The white paper states ‘we (the government) will ensure that the strategies CDRP’s produce now also set out action to tackle anti-social behaviour across the local area. CDRP’s will audit the extent of local problems, actively consult with their local community and take forward a strategy to tackle the problem.’

This project will provide a useful pilot for our CDRP to address this point in the White Paper.

5.3 Human Rights Act & Planning

None relating to this report

Background Papers: Respect and Responsibility – taking a stand against anti-social behaviour, March 2003; The Council’s LPSA – Cabinet May 2003