

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 4

**REPORT TO:** Halton Strategic Partnership Board  
**DATE:** 18<sup>th</sup> January 2006  
**SUBJECT:** NRF Allocations 2006-2008

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

At its last meeting the Board agreed the outline structure for the new Community strategy. It also decided that with that done work should take place to consider how the available NRF resources should be invested behind the emerging priorities of the strategy. It was agreed that a small LSP Finance Group should meet to consider this. The purpose of this report is to consider the recommendations of the Finance Group.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board agree all of the proposals set out in Section 4.0 below and summarised in the Table.

### BACKGROUND

Since its inception the NRF budget for Halton has been as follows:

2002/03	£3,236,128
2003/04	£3,928,410
2004/05	£5,045,350
2005/06	£6,720,760

Government has committed itself to continuing with this funding for two more years. A decision on funding mechanisms beyond April 2008 will have to wait until the Treasury public spending review in 2007. At this stage it will be prudent to assume that NRF will cease by 2008 and plan accordingly. Halton's NRF allocations for the next two years are as follows:

2006/07	£6,048,684
2007/08	£5,376,608 (indicative)

In previous years the available NRF resource has largely been divided pro rata across the five SSPs. A key task for the Finance Group was to find an objective mechanism to prioritise the priorities both at the level of the five themes, and within the themes themselves. Each of the SSPs submitted proposals, which were revised and considered at two meetings. The Group agreed some key criteria to aid decision making on financial allocations. These were:

- A focus on substantive long term impact rather than short term gains
- Importance of smaller, softer improvements that add to the large scale impacts on floor targets that mainstream resources should have

- Interventions that affect a multiple of priorities or targets may be preferable to single target schemes
- Sustainability and thought out exit strategies are important to allow SSPs to intelligently invest and disinvest
- Prevention is preferable to remedial action
- A robust evidence-based approach is essential
- Actions that cut across multiple priorities should be favoured
- A focus on outcomes and adding value
- Clear targeting of the most deprived geographical areas
- Clear impact on Floor targets with perhaps greater emphasis on those with the farthest to travel

## PROPOSAL

Following much discussion the Group offer the following funding recommendations to the Board:

- That the Central Team budget will be set at £363K for 2006/7 – reduced pro rata by the reduction in overall NRF resources, and will reduce similarly in 2007/8. A supplementary paper will be presented to the Board next time on the role of the Central Team, its detailed budget and its exit strategy post 2008.
- That the Area Forum budget should remain at £300K per annum. Attached to this paper at Annex A. are some suggestions to refresh and reframe the criteria governing use of this money. Specifically this makes more explicit the link to the work of the Partnership, the changing emphasis of the Community Strategy and the focus on impact on floor targets and areas of severe deprivation. It is suggested that the Board endorse this as a condition for how the Council should use NRF for this purpose.
- That the NRF budget carries too large a burden of overhead. Coordination and administration of SSPs is vital. However, the Group take the view that the cost of this should be borne by partners or non-NRF budgets. To help partners the core role of the Coordinators needs to be better defined. A job description has been constructed for a generic coordinator, which is attached at Annex B. It is suggested that the Board endorse this so that each SSP is able to use it and add/expand this to take account of specific roles and duties pertinent to its own theme.
- There was much discussion of the role and funding of Halton Together. It was noted that Government funding was running down with core funding support being cut by almost 30% to £115K next year through SSCF, and resources for small grants removed completely. It was agreed that NRF could not make up for these losses. Partners will need to work with Halton Together to look at ways of sustaining CEN activity. As part of this it may be that the SSP Coordination function could help with servicing the mirror groups.
- Attached at Annex C. is a list of the projects as endorsed by the Group under the 5 agreed themes for next year. If the Board accept the allocations in the scheme listings, the planning figures for the NRF budget will be as follows:

	<b>06/07</b>	<b>07/08</b>
<b>NRF Available</b>	<b>6,048,684</b>	<b>5,376,608</b>
<b>Area Forums</b>	300,000	300,000
<b>Central Activity</b>	363,000	320,000
<b>Healthy Halton</b>	984,200	853,800
<b>Safer Halton</b>	1,301,527	1,129,300
<b>Urban Renewal</b>	887,060	769,700
<b>Children &amp; YP</b>	1,205,500	1,046,00
<b>Employment &amp;Skills</b>	1,103,841	957,800

The SSP figures for 06/07 allow for 1.75% overprogramming. The indicative figures for 07/08 allow for no overprogramming at this stage. If the Board agree these allocations SSPs will need to construct their final Action Plans for the next two years and bring them to the next meeting for endorsement.

## **ISSUES**

The Group has been diligent in their work and done a tremendous job in making recommendations in trying circumstances. However, there remain a number of issues that may need further consideration. These are as follows:

- *Housing Sustainability* – data function would be examined as part of the LSP Observatory initiative, as would proposals for data analysis within the Safer Halton Partnership.
- *Sports Partnership and Health & Physical Development* – agreed that funding of £70K be agreed for these two schemes, and at this stage responsibility be shared between the themes of Health and Children and Young People. The precise stewardship will be decided later.
- *Halton Festival* – agreed that the pilot had been a tremendous success for the Partnership, but it was debatable whether NRF should continue to support it given the need for sustainability. It was agreed that David Parr would write to all partners asking them to consider financial and in-kind support for the Festival in the future.
- The position of CEN small grants was discussed and it was agreed that whilst useful these would not take priority over submitted schemes. It was agreed that a position paper summarising the existing small grant funds in Halton should be provided to a future Board meeting for information.

## **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund – Funding Guidance for Area Forums**

The following information is intended to provide guidance to the Area Forums, as to the use of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund element of the Area Forum budget.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) is an allocation of money provided by Central Government to enable England's most deprived local authorities, in collaboration with their Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), to narrow the gap between their deprived neighbourhoods and those of the rest of the country.

The NRF is a targeted grant that can only be spent in a way that will tackle deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods. The grant is time-limited and should be used to facilitate the more effective, long-term targeting of mainstream resources. In particular, those that relate to floor targets and local floor targets which have been identified in a local authority's Community Strategy and other deprivation-related Government targets agreed by each of the LSPs.

Floor targets are set by Government to ensure that at a local level, services are focused even more strongly on the key challenges of neighbourhood renewal e.g. increased employment, improved economic performance, reduced crime, better educational attainment, improved health, better housing and cleaner, safer, greener public spaces.

It is therefore important when considering the merits of a funding proposal that has been made to an Area Forum, that the following criteria is adhered to:

- There is a focus on substantive long term impact rather than short term gains
- Actions that affect a multiple of priorities or targets may be preferable to single target schemes
- Prevention is preferable to remedial action
- A robust evidence-based approach is followed
- Actions contribute to one or more of Halton's five key strategic priorities i.e.
  - Improving Health in Halton.
  - Urban Renewal in Halton.
  - Opportunities for Children and Young People in Halton.
  - Opportunities for Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton.
  - Making Halton a Safer Place.
- There is a focus on outcomes which add value
- There is clear targeting on the most deprived geographical neighbourhoods
- Clear impact on Floor targets with perhaps greater emphasis on those with the farthest to travel
- No long term long term financial commitment is required
- The proposal has the support of the local community

Information relating to Halton's floor targets or Community Strategy can be found in the publications section of the Halton Strategic Partnership website [www.haltonpartnership.net](http://www.haltonpartnership.net) or by contacting the Central Partnership Team on 0151 471 7528.

## Annex B

### **Draft Generic Job Description relating to the role of SSP Coordinator**

**Job Title:** SSP Coordinator

**Grade:** To be confirmed

**Responsible to:** SSP Chair with day to day management by host organisation

#### **Purpose and Scope of the Post**

The SSP has agreed a strategy and action plan, which adopts a balanced approach to improving the quality of life in Halton and contributes to the achievement of the targets set within the Community Strategy. This Partnership is one of the five Special Strategic Partnerships in the Halton Local Strategic Partnership (HSP), and includes senior level representation from all key local organisations involved including the Local Authority and the Private and Voluntary & Community Sectors. The SSP works through bending mainstream resources to meet priorities, as well as identifying and deploying new resources and allocating matching funding from partner organisations.

#### **Key Responsibilities**

This post will facilitate the SSP to deliver progress in improving life in Halton and, as such, will manage the coordination of the strategic and operational work of the SSP, including:

- Coordinating the SSP and managing the implementation of its strategy. This includes leading on liaison between partners and monitoring agreed actions in strategic areas involving communicating with Partnership members and planning, facilitating and recording partnership and other high level meetings. Particular emphasis should be on cross-cutting themes and links with the Community Empowerment Network (CEN),
- Enabling an ongoing review of the SSP membership and functioning, ensuring that SSP planning processes are linked up, and an appropriate structure, that is understood and agreed by all relevant individuals and organisations, is developed.
- The establishment of a joint protocols between the SSP and the HSP, between the SSP and the CEN, which ensures that the priorities for Halton and the context within which they are developed are understood and agreed by all members of the SSP, the HSP and the CEN.
- The development of a framework within and outside the SSP (and its sub groups) where partners and other SSPs can identify and progress cross-cutting issues in order to work collaboratively to ensure the targets for Halton are reached.

- The development and submission of applications seeking to secure external funding to support the work of the SSP and to give advice to Partnership members on appropriate funding streams.
- To lead on a number of national and local initiatives and campaigns on behalf of the SSP.
- The dissemination of Government and regional information to all Partnership members and acting on the Partnership's behalf to meet required deadlines.
- On behalf of the SSP, monitor, review and evaluate the SSP plan, and its associated projects, to raise any issues of concern, updates, revised targets to the Partnership. This will include collecting and interrogating data.
- Working in conjunction with the HSP and other SSPs to promote the work of the SSP across the borough, ensuring local targets are understood and agreed by all relevant organisations and that a coordinated approach to celebrating the achievement of these targets is presented.
- Coordinate the day-to-day work of the SSP, including organising meetings, sending supporting papers, etc.
- If/where necessary, line manage staff appointed to support the SSP, including administrative staff.
- Represent the SSP and deputise for the Chair at other appropriate forums including local, sub regional, regional and national partnership events.
- Submit regular reports to the HSP Board, SSP board and other relevant committees, including reports on the progress of programmes and initiatives, and their related expenditure and budget management.
- Undertake other such duties, from time to time as may be commensurate with the grading and responsibilities of the job.

### **Other Requirements**

May need to occasionally work in evenings or at weekend

### **Person Specification**

The coordinator leads development and project work across the SSP and organises dissemination and partnership events to share good practice and promote learning. The coordinator also ensures the various groups focus on priority actions and achieve the SSP targets set out in the Community Strategy. As such the coordinator requires knowledge, skills and experience in working in a multi-agency and/or multi-sector regeneration partnership setting, particularly in the areas of:

### **Managing Information & Communication**

- Conducting presentations
- Leading meetings/briefings
- Organisational Communication Processes
- Writing Reports
- Collation and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data
- Action Planning

### **Managing People (e.g. Staff, project managers and partners)**

- Dealing with Conflict
- Providing Development for Individuals
- Stress Management
- Team Building/Building Trust
- Valuing Diversity
- Working with Others/Partnerships

### **Managing Resources**

- Budgetary/Financial management
- Making a Financial Case
- Research
- Project management/performance monitoring
- Risk management

### **Organisational Context**

- Best Value (Continuous Improvement)
- Business Ethics
- Business Planning/Strategy
- Change Management
- Economic/Political Awareness
- Meeting Customer Needs
- Objective Setting/Action Planning
- Organisational Decision-Making

### **Self Management**

- Assertiveness
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Negotiating/Influence
- Self Motivator/Ability to motivate others

### **Knowledge management**

- Relevant Government initiatives
- Performance Management
- Change Management
- Specific and detailed knowledge of SSP area of interest