

1. REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE SOCIAL INITIATIVES PROGRAMME

RR 10622

Officer responsible Community Relations Manager	Author Social Initiatives Monitoring Team
Corporate Plan Output: Social Initiatives Funding and Monitoring	

INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to update Councillors as to the progress of the Social Initiative Programme introduced in 1997. The first three-year funding agreements under this Programme are due for reconsideration during the 2000/01 financial year. It is also to recommend a future direction for the Programme which takes into account the Outputs and Standards Review.

BACKGROUND

The Council established the Social Initiatives Programme as one way of progressing the outcomes of the Community Development and Social Well-being Policy. Proposals were therefore to reflect this Policy. As a result 46 potential projects were identified at a cost of around \$3 million. Fifteen providers were eventually selected to provide a total of twenty-two separate projects at a combined cost of \$1.1 million.

The use of criteria (including, for example, that projects which attract outside funding should be prioritised ahead of other projects) and a ranking process (developed from the Community Development and Social Well-being Policy) enabled the Committee to reduce the 46 bids down to 15 projects with a total funding of \$995,000.

At the time the Programme was adopted as part of the Annual Plan, a further \$100,000 for drug education initiatives was added to the Programme.

The full list of the projects approved in the 1997/98 Annual Plan for the first year of a three-year funding programme were:

*Three Community Development Facilitators	\$130,000
*Mental Health Care	\$10,000
*Refugee and New Migrants	\$45,000
Anger Management	\$20,000
*Hebron Young Parents	\$50,000
Te Kaupapa Whakaora	\$25,000
Support for Disability Initiatives	\$40,000
Drug Initiatives	\$100,000
*Early Intervention	\$75,000
*Out of School Care Programmes	\$50,000
Youth Advocate	\$55,000
*Field Workers In Schools	\$110,000
*Employment - Youthworks	\$171,600
*Employment - Adult Employment	\$93,400
*Employment - Community Youth	\$100,000
*Employment – Actionworks	\$20,000
Total Projects Sum	\$1,095,000

* - Refer recommendation 4 at end of this clause

The Social Initiatives Programme began in the 1997/98 business year at a public signing ceremony on 30 October 1997. One of the concerns expressed by community groups was that annual funding only of projects was inefficient, because with no security of funding they could not fully develop their projects, and because it required them to put a lot of their time and energy into searching for new sources of funds as the end of the year approached. (These and other issues have subsequently been reinforced at the June Community Services Committee on funding for community groups.) It was agreed, therefore, that subject to the project performance criteria being met the Council would commit to funding these projects for at least three years.

In the first operating year projects began on a staggered basis as resources and facilities became available and project details were worked out. The Phillipstown Community Resource Centre was the last of the 22 selected projects to begin operation in October 1998. The staggered start to projects has meant that the first three years of the Social Initiatives funding is spread over five operating years (October 1997 to September 2002).

Initially the Leisure and Community Services Unit developed the Programme. Since the 1998 CLAS review the Programme has been the responsibility of the Community Relations Unit. George Clark was appointed at the end of 1998 to monitor the Programme.

SOCIAL AUDIT AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

Because of the scale of the Social Initiatives Programme and the high public profile, it was important that monitoring systems for determining the effectiveness of the programme and the individual projects be put in place.

An Annual Planning and Reporting process has been devised and implemented with positive feedback from all the projects. In the initial implementation process assistance was given to some providers, generally on request and/or depending on their lack of previous experience in an annual business-planning context. All projects are now fully operational and using the Annual Planning and Reporting process. Planning and reporting assistance and support is still required by some projects.

An external contractor has been engaged to conduct a 'social audit' (as distinct from a financial audit) of five of the projects. The audit process focuses on the performance of individual projects based on the outcomes from objectives stated in each project's Annual Plan. At the completion of these first five social audits the audit process will be assessed for effectiveness. Informal feedback so far received by the auditor has tended to confirm that projects are achieving planned outcomes. These first 'social audits' will be completed by the end of August 1999.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SOCIAL INITIATIVES PROGRAMME PROJECTS

A detailed report on each of the projects funded through the Social Initiatives Programme is attached as Appendix One.

All projects have progressed in the last twelve months. Objectives are being met, the new, and for some unfamiliar, Annual Planning and Reporting process is becoming an accepted part of organisational practice, and the public feedback from recipients of the various projects is consistently positive. A minority of projects still need support with the Annual Planning and Reporting process and one project (Anger Management) will be reviewing alternative delivery options (to be finalised in the 1999/2000 Annual Plan).

DISCUSSION

The second Social Initiatives operating year concluded on 30 June 1999. The final year is now underway for some of the early projects. The Council's long-term financial model allows for continuation of the Programme; however, issues related to continued CCC support for Social Initiatives have begun to be raised by current project providers, future potential providers, Council staff and Councillors. These issues include the process for applying for further funding and the relationship between the Social Initiatives Programme and Council's overall direction.

It seems appropriate to ensure that the review of the Social Initiatives Programme fits into the timeframe of the Outputs and Standards (O&S) review. Staff had envisaged suggesting a process for reviewing the Social Initiatives Programme later this year, to allow time to negotiate any changes to the funding allocation well before June 2000. However, in the light of the O&S review, we now suggest that those projects at the beginning of the funding cycle are guaranteed a further one year of funding. This will mean that any projects due to come to the end of their funding from July 2000 to June 2001 will receive one year of extra funding. Other projects would not be considered for renewal until the outcome of the O&S review is known. This would enable the O&S review to consider the Social Initiatives Programme, knowing that any impact on community groups currently funded would not be immediate and the groups would have reasonable notice of any changes.

Currently the Youth Advocate's position is funded from the Social Initiatives Programme. It is recommended that this item be removed and placed within the general Community Relations Unit budget from July 2000.

CONCLUSION

Projects funded under the Social Initiatives Programme are progressing well. Given that some projects reach the end of the agreed funding at the end of this financial year, now is an appropriate time to consider the future of the Programme. Staff believe that the O&S Review should consider the Social Initiatives Programme alongside all its other commitments and make decisions in this wider context. To achieve this, we also consider that the projects which finish soon should be rolled over for one year, to ensure that they receive adequate notice about the future of the Programme once the O&S review has been completed.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the report be received.
 2. That a review of the future of the Social Initiatives Programme be included in the Outcomes and Standards Review.
 3. That the \$55,000 in the current Social Initiatives Programme for the Youth Advocate's position be removed from the Programme and become part of the general Community Relations Unit budget from July 2000.
 4. That those Social Initiatives Programme projects which come to the end of their third year between July 2000 and June 2001 (as marked by an asterisk on the second page of this report) be rolled over for a further year.
 5. That decisions on the future of the Social Initiatives Programme funding be considered during, and be informed by, the Outcomes and Standards Review recommendations.

(Councillor Barbara Stewart requested that her vote against the above recommendation be recorded.)