

## **PATHWAYS SUPPORT UNIT**

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Economic Regeneration and Community Planning Select Committee of the current position of the Support Unit and the shape of future support for the Pathways communities.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Meridien Pure carried out a review of the current support provided to the Pathways areas, via the unit, against the changes in regeneration since 2000 when the Facilitating Finance bid was written, including Neighbourhood Renewal and the Community Planning process. The review highlighted that the PSU as currently configured no longer fits with the changes that have taken place in community engagement policy that have taken place over the past two years.
- 2.2 The review proposed a number of options for methods of providing a more appropriate range of support to the Pathways communities. These options constitute a fundamental change to the existing project, too great to be carried out by renegotiating the ERDF approval with Government Office for the Northwest (GONW).
- 2.3 Cabinet, at the meeting on 14 August, decided that the most appropriate course of action would be for the Council, as the bidder for ERDF, to write to Government Office indicating the decision to bring the project to an early close. From informal discussions with GONW the proposed revised structure for a new project would fit with their ambitions for a more holistic approach for support to communities across a whole range of initiatives and funding streams.
- 2.4 Negotiations have taken place with Wirral CVS and their solicitors, Brabners, to clarify the roles and actions needing to be taken following the decision to close the project early.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The Council has written to Wirral CVS setting a n end date, as the point beyond which it will cease to make payments towards the costs of the project.
- 3.2 The staff will receive their pay for the final month, but would not be expected to work those weeks. In addition the maximum amount of settlement pay, including weighting

for the early end to contracts will be made to those staff remaining at the end of the period.

- 3.3 Temporary, task related contracts would be issued, by the Council, to some individuals to cover the work of closing down the project.
- 3.4 The details of a new ERDF bid for facilitating finance, to provide support to communities until December 2007, are being finalised. Currently the project is in excess of £2.5m in total, with the Council contribution at the existing level of cash/in kind resource support of £90,000 p.a.
- 3.5 The proposals include a provision to support the New Wallasey SRB community partnerships as a legacy project and to provide a much broader basis for support to the existing partnerships linked to Pathways areas. This would include support across a wide spectrum of funding for project implementation as well as practical administration of meetings etc.
- 3.6 The project has been discussed by the existing Pathways Management Group, and will be subject to the endorsement by the Partnerships. It is expected that the outline bid will be submitted to GONW in November, with an anticipated decision on the full bid and a start date for the beginning of the new financial year. It is the intention that the new project would be implemented as quickly as is practicable to ensure that the support to Partnerships can continue with a minimum of disruption the details of the full bid will be the subject of a further separate report.
- 3.7 In the interim support to the Partnerships will be limited. The Pathways Programme manager is currently meeting each of the Chairs of the Partnerships to ascertain the individual support needs over the next few months. It is anticipated that support for the existing developing projects will be maintained via the lead partners/funders for those projects and that the facilitation of most meetings will be possible. There will be a constant review of the situation and if difficulties emerge steps will be devised to limit the problems.

#### **4. Financial & Staffing Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

#### **5. Local Member implications**

- 5.1 This report has direct implications for members of the following areas

Beechwood, Birkenhead, Seacombe, Egremont, Tranmere, Prenton, Moreton, Leasowe, Noctorum, Woodchurch, Bromborough, Town Lane Bebington, and Mill Park Eastham.

#### **6. Equal Opportunities implications**

- 6.1 The new arrangements are intended to have positive Equal Opportunities implications

**7. Human Rights implications**

7.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

**8. Community Safety**

8.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

**9. Local Agenda 21 implications**

9.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

**10. Planning implications**

10.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

**11. Background**

11.1 Meridien Pure report

**12. Recommendations**

12.1 That the report be noted.

**J. WILKIE**

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