

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: CENTRAL SCOTLAND REGIONAL EQUALITY COUNCIL (CSREC)
Meeting: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date: 10 APRIL 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Following the Public Pound report as presented to Scrutiny Committee last year. Members had asked for a report to ensure the organisation was focussed on delivering agreed outcomes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the Following the Public Pound scrutiny a report was produced on Central Scotland Regional Equality Council providing an assessment of the performance of the organisation in relation to the funding received. The funding awarded to CSREC is £15,200 with a further 'in kind' amount for their accommodation valued at £10,000.
- 2.2 The main findings from that discussion at Scrutiny Committee were that the risk rating for CSREC was deemed medium. This was based on recognition that the core funding was a contributory factor in CSREC being able to attract a significant sum of external funding totalling £159k. The rating also recognised that the organisation has experienced Board and staffing issues over 2012 /13 resulting in leadership and governance concerns.

3. PROGRESS AND UPDATE

- 3.1 Since the last report the new funding has resulted in the following projects now being operational. The reporting period up to December 2013 shows the following outputs:
- Anti-sectarian project – this is a 2 year approach in the Maddiston and Denny areas of Falkirk. Raising awareness by providing educational workshops and supporting young people in using drama to explore sectarianism. Feedback from Maddiston Primary School has been very positive where pupils are looking forward to more events. This, along with 4 workshops in Braes High and St. Mungos involving approx 100 pupils.
 - Good relations project – this is a one year outreach project with a focus on raising awareness about cultural diversity and good community relations among young people in Falkirk. The project is working with after school clubs giving information on different cultures through dance, drumming and story telling. To date 24 sessions have been delivered with 295 young people attending. The target for sessions delivered is 60 over the life of the project.

- Climate change – Eco friendly Falkirk – this is a 1 year pilot funded by Keep Scotland Beautiful to raise awareness of climate change and fuel poverty among minority ethnic communities in Falkirk. To date 3 local Eco Champions have been recruited with a target of 15 over the life of the project. Initially the project is working to help communities' access information and advice on saving energy in the home. This has involved providing free home visits (averaging 7 per month) to include installation of home energy monitors. In addition, work on raising energy awareness in schools has delivered 6 workshops to approx. 200 pupils.
- 3.2 Falkirk district has been the primary beneficiary of external funding which CSREC was able to win to deliver the new projects identified above. It is expected that the staff in these projects will continue to develop their scope and outcomes.
- 3.3 Sustainable CSREC projects:
 - Forth Valley Language Service – is now a social enterprise and it is expected that where additional income is generated this will benefit CSREC.
 - Equality related projects – Health Issues in the Community course. The purpose is to help individuals develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to understand health issues affecting local communities. 7 people have now gone on to study part 2 of the course.
 - Annual involvement in the Show Racism the Red Card initiative – this initiative has been running for 5 years and the recent event involved CSREC in 6 workshops delivered to a number of local primary schools.

4. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- 4.1 CSREC has been unable to demonstrate a great deal of activity in partner Councils of Stirling and Clackmannanshire. The level of funding CSREC receives from our neighbouring Councils is: Stirling £9k and Clackmannanshire £7k. It is worth noting that funding for 2014 / 15 will be maintained at current levels by Stirling however Clackmannanshire Council is reducing the funding by half and for a 6 month period only. This has the potential to affect the core funding of the organisation if funding from these Councils is further reduced.
- 4.2 The CSREC Board has experienced a number of changes this year in Chairperson position resulting in an impact on leadership and governance. These are now being addressed in that:
 - In November 2013 the AGM confirmed Michael Giannndrea as Chairperson; and
 - Training for Board Members has taken place on the topics of 'values and strategies' and 'duties and responsibilities'. (7 out of 9 members attended).
- 4.3 CSREC has an aspiration of providing a service across the wide equality agenda however the Board has recognised that they do not necessarily have the required skill / knowledge and therefore is making provision to add to its membership by means of co-opting people with experience of different equality work areas. (3 potential co-optees are invited as observers to the March meeting).

- 4.6 Council contacts are providing more hands on support e.g. providing support in staff interviews; monthly meetings with the Chairperson; quarterly meetings across the 3 Councils.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The following issues continue and on this basis the subsequent conclusions are offered for consideration:
- 5.2 In terms of **core business** CSREC still has some work to do to develop the organisation. The core funding from the 3 Councils will have contributed to the organisations ability to attract and draw down new funding however a difficulty still remains in terms of what the Council benefits from in terms of its direct £15k financial support and the indirect accommodation support (valued at £10k).
- 5.3 Concern continues over the organisations ability to lead and govern and whilst initiatives are in place e.g. training it is unknown at this stage of the long term impact of this. Co-optees would help to impact on the dynamic of the organisation leadership and decision making however again this is an unknown outcome at this stage.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the conclusion in this report.

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD

Date: 25 March 2014
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Nil

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506028 and ask for Celia Sweeney.