



To: Councillor Tim Bick, Executive Councillor for
Community Development and Health

Report by: Liz Bisset, The Director of Customer and
Community Services

Relevant scrutiny
committee: Community Services Scrutiny 14 October
2010

Wards affected: All Wards

Review of Safer City Grants Not a key decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Safer City grant programme is in its fifteenth year and was set up to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and anti-social behaviour. For most of that time the grant pot was made up of the equivalent of £37,000 revenue and £50,000 capital for each financial year. The capital element of the grant was usually agreed for periods of three years at a time. The revenue element formed part of the base community safety budget.
- 1.2 The current capital programme for Safer City grants finished in March 2010. It was agreed at Strategy and Resources Committee in January 2010 and July 2010 that unspent funding totalling £22,000 from 2009/10 could be carried forward into 2010/11 and form the grant pot for that year. It was also agreed that a bid for further capital funding for 2011/12 be prepared with a view to inclusion in the Medium Term Strategy or budget process for 2011/12.
- 1.3 In view of the current government cuts and the general review of all City Council grant pots, both revenue and capital grants have been reviewed for the period 2007/2010. The outcomes are reported here to assist in making a decision about the future of the Safer City grant programme.
- 1.4 The report provides an overview of the applications for revenue and capital 2007/2010 and their outcomes and project details are attached at Appendix A.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To support the continuation of the Safer City Grants programme in both capital and revenue.
- 2.2 To continue to fund both Safer City capital and revenue grant programmes, but at a reduced level of £12,000 for capital and £24,000 per annum for revenue (which was the actual revenue spend for last year).

3. Background

3.1 The Safer City Grant programme is in its fifteenth year, the grants were set up to reduce crime and the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.2 The primary purpose of Safer City grants is to support small scale community projects up to £5,000. Customers are discouraged from applying for grants greater than £5,000 but if they do the application is considered by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee at the usual committee cycle. Applications up to £5,000 are considered on a monthly basis by the Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health.

3.3 The current capital programme for Safer City grants finished in March 2010. It was agreed at Strategy and Resources Committee in January 2010 that unspent funding for 2009/10 could be carried forward to 2010/11 and that a bid for further capital funding for 2011/12 be prepared with a view to inclusion in the Medium Term Strategy.

3.4 In view of the current government cuts and the general review of all City Council grant pots, both revenue and capital grants have been reviewed for the 3 year period 2007/2010. The outcomes are reported here to assist in making a decision about the future of the Safer City grant programme.

3.5 Usually the Safer City Fund has £37,000 for revenue grants and £50,000 for capital grants, the capital element was reduced to £12,000 for 2010 (£22,000 including carry forward of commitments) as applications for capital grants had fallen off. The table below shows the budget and actual spend for the three years under review.

| | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010 to date |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Capital | | | | |
| Budget | £50k + £25k c/o* | £50k + £42k c/o* | £38k | £12k + £10k c/o* |
| Actual Spend | £33.4k | £61.1k | £27k | £15k committed to date |
| Revenue | | | | |
| Budget | £36.8k | £31.4k | £36.7k | £37.1k |
| Actual Spend | £36.6k | £31.0k | £24.3k | £19.1k to date |

*It is often necessary to request carry over for capital projects, especially those that have been approved towards the end of the financial year as they often take longer to complete than revenue projects.

3.6 The details of all approved and rejected grants can be found at Appendix A. In summary the grants funded included projects tackling, youth related anti-social behaviour, hate crime, domestic abuse, cycle crime, alcohol and drug related crime and issues affecting older people. Capital projects tackled environmental improvements including better lighting, CCTV and repairs to fencing.

3.7 The criteria for granting applications is set out on the City Council website and states that the project should be community based with evidence supplied for the need of the project. The aims should be defined and the cost realistic. The project should also fall within the priorities of the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership. Monitoring and evaluation should have been considered. Officers from the Community Safety Team advise applicants on how to demonstrate that the project is meeting the criteria.

3.8 There were 83 applications in the period with 19 of these being rejected. We have received 35 evaluations so far and 11 are pending as applicants have 6 months after the completion of the project to submit an evaluation. The remaining projects were not evaluated mainly due to changes in project management personnel. A lot of the evaluations are not of a high quality, mainly due to lack of experience in evaluating on the part of the project managers. We have run training sessions in the past on making applications and evaluating projects but although the sessions were reasonably well attended they did not improve the evaluations received.

3.9 19 applications were rejected during the review period because they did not meet the criteria for approval for the following reasons:

- The project would be duplicating work already being done by City Council or partnership organisations
- There was insufficient funds to approve all grants submitted and projects are considered on merit.
- There was no evidence to support the need for the project
- The application was made by an individual or profit making organisation
- The application sought running costs for an existing project
- The project was not realistically costed
- The project had not got the agreement of all residents to go ahead, e.g. where the intention was to gate a privately owned alleyway
- The project was not aimed at reducing crime and disorder and/or anti-social behaviour
- The project was considered to be part of the core business of an organisation

Where applications are rejected the applicants are given the reason for the rejection.

3.10 The Cambridge Community Safety Partnership has been successful in reducing crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour in the past three years, with crime overall down by 11.3% and criminal damage offences down by 19.6% in 2009/10. Safer City projects are very much part of the actions to achieve this. The projects often tackle the areas of more local concern and areas where Safer and Stronger Community funding would not be granted due to the difficulty of linking outcomes to hard crime reduction targets and National Indicator outcomes.

The kind of outcomes that we have had from Safer City Grants are:

Reduction in fear and positive perceptions around the reduction of anti-social behaviour, including anti-social driving

Reduction in cycle crime although the projects funded were aligned to a bigger campaign run by the police.

Reported changes in the attitude of young people to anti-social behaviour and its effects on others and more positive approaches to community cohesion

Arrests due to the implementation of CCTV.

Significant participation of children and young people in diversionary activities particularly sporting activities.

The outcomes of the projects tend to be more anecdotal and are difficult to tie to hard crime reduction targets, as they often refer to very small geographical areas or intense 1-1 work with small groups. The evaluations suggest that the projects have been successful in reducing the fear of crime and in changing perceptions of crime in local areas, particularly with regard to environmental improvements. They have also been successful in providing diversionary activities to young people who may otherwise have been involved in crime or anti-social behaviour, although how significant the prevention aspect was, is impossible to quantify.

Discussion with City Council Officers and police colleagues suggest that capital applications have fallen off due to lack of staffing resource to help community groups in managing the projects. In the past, Police Community Support Officers, Housing Officers and Community Development Officers often helped community groups to make applications and supported them in the ongoing management and evaluation of the project, this has not been happening to the same extent recently. For the reasons given it is recommended that the Safer City Grants programme be continued but at reduced levels of funding to reflect recent reductions in applications, namely, £12,000 capital and £24,000 revenue.

4. Implications

Financial Implications – The financial implications of approving the continuation of funding for the Safer City Capital and Revenue Programmes for a further 3 years from 2011/12, assuming the level of funding as recommended, would be a base budget revenue saving of approximately £13,000 per annum and a capital bid of £12,000 per annum. If the Safer City grant programme is not supported from 2011/12 this source of funding for local community safety projects will no longer be available. If approved by Strategy & Resources, the financial implications will be picked up as part of the 2011/12 budget process, with funding approval sought as part of the budget setting report in February 2011.

Staffing Implications – None

Equal Opportunities Implications – If the Safer City programme is cancelled it could mean that some sections of the community do not have any other access to funds to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in their area.

Procurement Implications - None

Environmental Implications – None

Community Safety Implications – This scheme helps the council fulfil its responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

5. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
Future Capital funding for Safer City Grant Scheme – report to Strategy and Resources Committee – 18/01/2010
Safer City Applications 2007 to 2010
Safer City Grant Evaluations 2007 to 2010
Safer City guidelines – can be viewed by visiting:
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/community-safety/safer-city-grants.en>

6. Appendices

Appendix A – Safer City grant scheme: Summary of applications (2007 to 2010)

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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