

Agenda Item 9(ii)

Report to the Warwickshire Public Service Board

22nd September 2008

Safer and Stronger Communities Capital Grant – 2008/09 Spending Proposals

Report of the Safer Block Lead and the LAA Accountable Officer

Summary

In 2008/09, the Home Office is making available to Warwickshire County Council, a Safer and Stronger Communities capital grant of £173,421. In addition to this funding a £4,972 capital carry forward from 2007/08 is also available, giving total capital resources for 2008/09 of £178,393.

In 2007/08 this grant was part of the LAA Pooled Grant, with the use of the grant approved by the PSB on recommendation Warwickshire Safer Communities Partnership (WSCP).

For 2008/09 WSCP is seeking PSB support for their proposed use of this funding. If supported the proposal will then go forward to the County Council for final approval.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the PSB:

- (i) Support the proposed use of the 2008/09 Safer and Stronger Communities capital grant, as recommended by WSCP shown in Table 1.
- (ii) Supports the proposed use of any capital contingency, shown in Table 2, should resources become available.
- (iii) Seeks approval from the Warwickshire County Council for the grant to be used by WSCP for the purposes outlined in the report.

1 Background

- 1.1 In 2007/08 the LAA Pooled Grant included a capital element as part of the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund. The PSB allocated this resource to the Safer Block, with most of the funding going as a capital grant to the CDRPs.
- 1.2 For 2008/09 the position changed. As part of the 2008/09 Local Government Settlement the County Council has received a Safer and Stronger Communities Capital Grant of £173,000 for 2008/09 and an equivalent indicative amount for the following two years.

- 1.3 At its meeting on 26 June 2008 the PSB requested that that Safer and Stronger Themed Blocks consider how they would wish to use the £173,000 capital grant for Safer and Stronger Communities, in 2008/09, to deliver the outputs and outcomes of the new LAA and report back to the PSB, with proposals. These proposals would then be forwarded to the County Council, seeking approval for the use of the grant.
- 1.4 This report is the result of the request from the PSB in June. There are no proposals from the Stronger Block for 2008/09. Therefore the report focuses on the proposals from the Safer Block.

2 Purpose of the Allocation

- 2.1 There are no longer any formal grant conditions relating to this capital grant, rather the spending must comply with the accounting policies of the County Council and comply with the purpose for which the grant was approved by Parliament. Therefore any proposals to use the grant must be aimed at tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and drugs, empowering communities, and improving the condition of streets and public spaces; in particular for disadvantaged neighbourhoods where these issues often require more attention.

3 Process for Developing the Proposals

- 3.1 On the 3 June 2008, WSCP proposed that the capital under spend of £4,972 from 2007/08 should be retained within the Safer Communities Block in 2008/09, as a contingency. At the same meeting, WSCP requested that a sub group of the Community Safety Practitioner Group meet to agree capital spending proposals for 2008/09.
- 3.2 On the 17 June 2008, the Community Safety Practitioners Group agreed the following process for capital funding proposals:
- CDRPs should submit funding proposals, within mutually agreed limits, (based on a previously agreed allocation criteria) for the 2008/09 SSCF capital. These limits were Stratford £32,395 (19%), Warwick £39,215 (23%), Rugby £32,395 (19%), Nuneaton and Bedworth £39,215 (23%) and North Warwickshire £27,280 (16%).
 - That a minimum of £2,500 plus any capital funding not utilised within CDRP allocations should be added to the contingency.

4 Capital Proposals

- 4.1 On the 8 August 2008, WSCP considered 2008/09 capital funding proposals and agreed that the proposals totalling £176,439, shown in Table 1 below, should be recommended to the PSB. These proposals include using £10,000 of the contingency to fund the A-frame crime prevention trailers.
- 4.2 As a result of these proposals being supported £1,958 would remain unallocated in the contingency. If for any reason one or more of the above proposals cannot proceed, is funded from elsewhere, or costs less than originally anticipated, WSCP are seeking support from the PSB, that any capital under spend be utilised to fund the proposals in Table 2 below, in the priority order shown.

Table 1: 2008/09 Capital Spending Proposals		
Allocated to:	Capital Funding £	Proposal
Stratford CDRP	6,000	Overt decoy vehicle for police use CCTV (ANPR) camera
	26,000	
	32,000	
Warwick CDRP	13,000	Traffic management plan to address violent crime and ASB in Bedford Street and Tailstock Street, Leamington Spa CCTV (ANPR) Camera
	22,549	
	35,549	
Rugby CDRP	14,895	Youth Shelter – Wolston <i>(A bid is also being made to the Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) for this funding. If the bid to the YOF is successful, this money will be available to fund the contingency projects)</i>
	7,500	
	10,000	
	32,395	
Nuneaton & Bedworth CDRP	39,215	Domestic Abuse Refuge (contribution to purchase of building) <i>(If the purchase of the building does not proceed Nuneaton and Bedworth CDRP will bring forward alternative proposals to WSCP for consideration)</i>
	39,215	
North Warwickshire CDRP	15,981	Lighting a multi- use games facility ASB Database
	11,299	
	27,280	
Warwickshire Police	10,000	2 'A' frame crime prevention trailers
	10,000	
Total	176,439	

Table 2: Priority Ranking of Contingency Allocations			
Priority	Capital Funding £	Allocated to:	Proposal
1	7,500	Warwickshire Police	'Smartwater' Vehicle
2	12,000	Serious Violent Crime Group	Head Cameras
3	7,792	WAYC	First Gear Pre-Learner Driving Courses

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Safer Block Lead

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Accountable Officer

- Capable of incentivising a similar level of ambition and stretch in relation to targets as the previous scheme.

3 New LAA Performance Reward Grant

3.1 Building on these principles a number of components of the reward scheme have already been decided or are positive proposals from the Government in the consultation paper:

- Reward will be calculated based on **average** performance across the basket of 34 indicators in the Warwickshire LAA (i.e. excluding the 16 mandatory education indicators and the local indicators). This is different from the current LPSA reward grant which is calculated per indicator.
- A baseline and target for the end of the LAA period will be agreed for each indicator. The target levels which will attract reward grant will be confirmed at the first annual review of the LAA in 2009.
- The latest available audited data before targets are finalised will be used as the baseline. If, due to problems of data availability a baseline and target cannot be finalised at this time then the indicator will be excluded for the reward grant calculation. Any subsequent changes to indicators will also result in their exclusion from the reward grant calculation.
- The performance score on an individual target will show the proportion of distance travelled between the baseline and the target. A score of 100% means the target has been achieved or exceeded, a score of 0% means no improvement on the baseline has taken place.
- A minimum average performance of 60% (in terms of moving from the baseline towards the target) will need to be achieved before any reward grant will be paid.
- The maximum reward grant will only be payable if all the targets are achieved.
- The level of reward grant will be calculated in 2011, based on the audited measure of achievement in relation to the target.

4 Consultation Response

4.1 The consultation paper contains 8 questions relevant to Warwickshire. The questions are primarily seeking clarification that partnerships are happy with the proposals in Section 3 above. In the main, given the principles already agreed, there is nothing controversial in the proposals and it is recommended that the proposals are accepted in the PSBs response, as providing the simplest way of delivering on the Government's aims. A full list of the consultation questions and proposed response is attached at Appendix A.

5 Next Steps

5.1 Given that the consultation is unlikely to deliver significant changes to the Government's proposals, the key issue for the PSB is to maximise the reward grant achieved by Warwickshire. The 2009 refresh is the time when many of the issues will be clarified and therefore the PSB is recommended to ask Block Leads to ensure that the agreement of baselines and targets as part of the 2009 refresh and the consequent delivery planning reflect the wish to maximise Warwickshire's achievement of performance reward grant.

Dave Clarke

Strategic Director of Resources, Warwickshire County Council and
Accountable Officer of the Warwickshire LAA

Proposed Warwickshire Response to the Consultation

Question 1:

Do you agree that performance below baseline and above target should be disregarded when calculating the average level of performance across the LAA?

Proposed Response:

Warwickshire supports the proposal that performance below baseline and above target should be disregarded when calculating the average level of performance. We believe that without some limit or cap on performance (positive or negative) there is the potential for one indicator to significantly skew the overall calculation of average performance. Such skew does not sit comfortable with the key principal of reward grant to incentivise change across the all the LAA indicators.

Question 2:

Do you agree that starting reward entitlement at 60% provides the best balance in terms of incentivising ambitious and consistent performance whilst providing a realistic level of challenge?

Proposed Response:

Warwickshire accepts that to meet the principle of incentivising performance across all targets requires a minimum level of performance to be achieved before any reward grant is paid.

We also support the impact of this; in that once the minimum average has been met the amount of additional reward grant received for performance above this minimum level is higher. We accept that if no minimum threshold were introduced then the additional reward grant for performance towards the higher end of the spectrum would not be sufficient to generate the incentivisation the government is seeking.

We have no strong opinion on whether 60% is the correct threshold, but accept there is merit in continuing with the same threshold used in the current LPSA reward grant scheme.

Question 3:

Do you agree it is not necessary (given the lower threshold of 60%) to require areas to achieve a proportion of targets in full before they are able to earn any reward?

Proposed Response:

Warwickshire supports the proposal not to require areas to achieve a proportion of targets in full before they are able to earn any reward. Any requirement to achieve a minimum number of targets in full would add increased complexity into the system and potentially result in an authority achieving 90% on all targets but getting no reward grant because a minimum number of targets had not been achieved in full. As well as not meeting the principle of simplicity it also does not promote the principle of rewarding average performance.

Question 4:

Do you agree with the proposal for determining the baseline for calculating entitlement to Performance Reward Grant?

Proposed Response:

We support the proposals in relation to determining the baseline. To agree that to work successfully the reward model requires a clear and unambiguous baseline for determining the starting point for improvement to be rewarded over the course of the LAA.

We also accept that the baseline and target must use data gathered in the same way over the same length of time. However, there is a caveat to this latter point. If the government changes the definition or required method of calculation of a National Indicator during the period of the LAA then individual authorities should not be penalised, in terms of the level of reward grant they would have received had the indicator not been changed.

Question 5:

Do you agree that for the purposes of determining reward grant entitlement the latest available performance data in the final year of the LAA should generally be used?

Proposed Response:

We support the proposal; however, we believe there is a need to clearly remove any ambiguity. We would suggest that at the time the baselines and targets are set as part of the 2009 annual refresh an agreed specification of the data source against which final performance will be measured is also agreed. This agreement should be along the lines of Figure 7 in the consultation paper.

Question 6:

Do you agree that the second instalment of PRG should be adjusted if a complete set of performance data is not available when claiming the first instalment in 2010/11?

Proposed Response:

Warwickshire supports this proposal but would welcome clarification of the indicators where this will apply being agreed as part of the 2009 refresh.