

SCOTTISH RURAL PARTNERSHIP FUND – CONSULTATION PAPER

BACKGROUND

The Scottish Executive is consulting on the future of the Scottish Rural Partnership Fund (which had a budget of £3.123m in 2003/4) in order to improve on its focus and delivery. The Fund is made up of the three strands listed below and is available to not-for-profit community and voluntary organisations and partnerships.

- The Rural Challenge Fund (RCF) – tackling rural problems
- Rural Strategic Support Fund (RSSF) – revenue/core cost grants to Local Rural Partnerships
- Local Capital Grants Scheme (LCGS) – capital grants for community and voluntary groups to provide new or upgraded premises. These are prioritised by Local Authorities.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

The major points to consider are:

1. If the definition of rural Scotland as a settlements of less than 3,000 persons is suitable.
2. Whether community businesses should be included and if this would apply to agriculture and fisheries
3. Whether the Fund should be retained as is, merged into one or distributed on behalf of rural Community Planning Partnerships, or dispersed into existing rural grants (It is suggested that the fund should be retained)
4. To introduce a fast track small grants scheme open all year round to include funding for capacity building
5. What support and guidance should be available to increase success rates of applications and projects?
6. Should the levels of funding be increased from the current ceilings – RCF and RSSF up to £50,000 and LCGS = up to £100,000?
7. Should the level of match funding required be changed from 25% in-kind?
8. Should the period of grant claim be extended to allow for carrying over funds between financial years?

ACTION

Arlene Cullum, the Council's Corporate Funding Officer has circulated the document around the Council's various departments and is seeking comments by 23 April 2004. The comments will then be collated into a draft document which will be circulated around on 7 May for final comments.

The meeting needs to decide on the following:

1. Whether each organisations replies individually
2. Whether we draft a joint reply as a CPP
3. Whether we incorporate our comments into the Council's comments