

Report to: **Executive**
Date: **6 February 2007**
Report of: **Executive Member for Social Inclusion & Culture**
Subject: **Easington Council of Voluntary Services**
Ward: **All**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request approval to transfer the 2006/2007 and future funding identified for Easington Council of Voluntary Services (ECVS) to East Durham Community Development Trust (EDCDT).

2. Consultation

- 2.1 In preparing this report, consultation has taken place with the Executive Member for Regeneration and Development, Director of Regeneration and Development, Head of Regeneration and Development, Principal Regeneration Officer (Programmes and Funding) and the Senior Regeneration Officer (Finance and Management).

3. Background

- 3.1 At the meeting of the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership Executive on 9th December 2005 it was agreed that £1.9 million of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund would be allocated to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) for the financial years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. The funding is specifically for the development and growth of the VCS in East Durham to aid the better delivery of services at a local level. The fund is referred to as the Community Resource Fund (CRF).
- 3.2 An Action Plan for the CRF was developed, which was approved by the LSP Executive on the 23rd June 2006. The CRF Action Plan highlighted that there are a significant number of gaps in support services to the VCS, and that neither ECVS nor the East Durham Community Empowerment Network (EDCEN) offered the role of an established anchor body to the VCS.
- 3.3 To move forward with joint delivery of services, it was agreed that a new development trust, EDCDT, would be established for the VCS in Easington and that ECVS and EDCEN would merge into the new development Trust. The two charities would then be dissolved.
- 3.4 The development Trust will offer the following services:
- Support and Development for local groups, including information and advice (funding, accounting, legal issues, etc.)
 - Representation through consultation; training of community members to sit on decision-making bodies and lobbying/advocacy.
 - Sector promotion through development of the skills of the sector; policy development; setting quality standards and best practice; research; and liaison with other sectors.
- 3.5 The development Trust will also create establish a VCS 'One Stop Shop' by acquiring a new building. The building will be used to house the new charity, and have rentable office space to Voluntary and Community Sector groups to generate income for the Trust.

4. Position Statement

4.1 Legal Status

4.1.1 The merger between ECVS and EDCEN is governed by both Charity and Company Law.

4.1.2 The merger will take place by both organisations combining their assets and transferring them to the new development Trust. The process should be completed by February 2007.

4.1.3 The new development Trust named 'East Durham Community Development Trust' was registered as limited company by guarantee by Companies House on 13th September 2006. The Companies registration number is 5934124.

4.1.4 The development Trust was also registered for charitable status by the Charities Commission on 19th January 2006. The Charities registration number is 1117642.

4.2 Objectives

The aim of the Development Trust is to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of urban or rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation in the East Durham and surrounding area. This will be achieved by means of the relief of unemployment and poverty; the advancement of education; the advancement, protection and promotion of health; the provision of recreational facilities for the public at large, or those who by reason of their youth, age or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances have the need for such facilities; to further people's learning and development opportunities in order to improve quality of life, and also to establish a building as a community resource centre.

This incorporates the aims and objectives of both existing ECVS and EDCEN.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 This report is seeking support to transfer the £30,000 allocated to ECVS for 2006/2007 (allocation agreed at Executive 21st February 2006) to EDCDT.

5.1.2 Bank accounts have been established and proper financial management systems are in place.

5.2 Legal

5.2.1 It is not considered that there are any legal implications.

5.3 Policy

5.3.1 Previous Council policy has been to fund the CVS for the life of each Council and it is recommended to maintain the commitment to fund the service, which will, however be delivered by EDCDT.

5.3.2 As the new management structure will be in place for EDCDT, it is proposed to formalise over the next financial year, a service level agreement between the Council and EDCDT in order that this agreement can be used as a basis to assess performance.

5.4 Risk

- 5.4.1 A risk assessment has been completed and the necessary actions required to manage the identified risks have been/will be implemented.

5.5 Communications

- 5.5.1 ECVS will be informed as to the outcome of this request and publicity will be sought regarding the handover of grant to EDCDT and an appropriate press statement made. In addition the District Council will ask to be recognised on any publication produced by the EDCDT.

5.6 Corporate

- 5.6.1 The role of the EDCDT fits in with the corporate plan by working in partnership to give support to local community group that deliver services and facilities which improve the health of residents, develop locally based learning opportunities and builds capacity.

5.7 Equality and Diversity

- 5.7.1 It is not considered that there are any Equality and Diversity implications as EDCDT is required to deliver its services equitably.

5.8 E-Government

- 5.8.1 It is not considered that there are any E-Government implications.

5.9 Procurement

- 5.9.1 It is not considered that there are any procurement implications.

5.10 Social Inclusion

- 5.10.1 Core funding of EDCDT will give further support to community/voluntary groups operating throughout the district who offer a wide range of facilities/services to the community some of which are located in areas of greatest need.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 It is recommended that the £30,000 grant for 2006/2007 previously approved for ECVS be transferred to EDCDT.

Background Papers/Documents Referred to in Preparing this Report:-

District of Easington Risk Assessment
Copy of CRF Action Plan

Item no.