

**REPORT TO: SAFER AND STRONGER STRATEGIC THEME GROUP ON 21
MAY 2009**

SUBJECT: FAIRER SCOTLAND FUND

**BY: MORAY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 The reason for this report is to update for The Safer and Stronger Theme group on progress made in the development of the fund, to consider how it can contribute to the achievement of the Fairer Scotland Fund and to agree proposed changes to the investment process.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Safer and Stronger Theme Group:

- **notes progress made in the development of the fund**
- **considers how it can contribute to the achievement of the Fairer Scotland Fund objectives and put forward ideas on how the fund could be invested in line with its key priorities.**
- **consider and agrees proposed changes to the process for investment of the Fairer Scotland Fund**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At the Safer and Stronger strategic theme group meeting, held on 19 February 2009, it was agreed that all the theme groups, as well as the Community Engagement Group, would be approached to identify how they could contribute to the achievement of the Fairer Scotland Fund objectives.

3.2 The Fairer Scotland Fund submission was presented last year by the Moray Community Planning Partnership (MCP) to the Scottish Government and outlines the MCP's approach to the use of the fund in tackling poverty and deprivation in Moray. It seeks to address how the fund could be used to assist in regenerating our most disadvantaged communities, improving the life chances of individuals and groups experiencing poverty and disadvantage and improving employability, particularly for young people and other hard-to-reach groups.

3.3 The fund is intended to be used as a catalyst to influence service planning and delivery and direct mainstream resources to best effect in tackling poverty and disadvantage. It has been agreed that the fund should not be promoted as a grant scheme or bidding process. Rather it would use the Partnership structure

to allow the process to be linked into the Partnership's priorities in the Single Outcome Agreement and objectives around social inclusion. This also takes account of the 'cross-cutting' nature of the process of tackling poverty and disadvantage.

- 3.4 The Social Inclusion Implementation Group developed criteria, on which all proposals for funding are to be based. These are set out in the guidelines produced to inform the process. An outline proposal form is also available for interested parties to submit their ideas.
- 3.5 The deadline for the first round of proposals was the 17 April and 13 proposals were received. The monetary value of these combined proposals far exceeded the value of the fund. The proposals received were split as follows (based on the 3 key objectives of the fund):

Regenerating the Most Disadvantaged Communities	4 (30%)
Improving Life chances of individual and Communities	9 (69%)
Improving Employability	7 (53%)

Five of the proposals received were fitting with the key priorities of the Smarter theme group and seven fitting with the key priorities of the Safer and Stronger Theme Group. There were no submissions through the other groups for this first round.

- 3.6 The Social Inclusion Implementation group considered these proposals on the 27 April and approved three bids to be presented to the Community Planning Board. Six bids were not approved and three were deferred. Further information is being sought on another proposal.
- 3.7 The deferred proposals all focused on the 'Improving Employability' objective and it was agreed that they should come under the Strategic Direction of the Employability Action Group (formally More Choices, More Chances). It was also agreed that all employability provision under the fund be subject to the Council Commissioning process to ensure full integration and co-ordination among the providers. A specification will be drawn up based on the identified priorities for tackling poverty in Moray and applications will thereafter be invited.
- 3.8 At the Community Planning Board meeting on the 7 May, 2009 of the proposals presented were approved these were:

The Moray Council, Children's and Families Social Work
GIRFEC (Getting It right For Every Child) Development Officer (awarded till
March 2010) £33,750

The Moray Council, Domestic Abuse Forum
2 part time family support workers (12 month pilot) £30,000

- 3.9 The third proposal submitted through Moray Council Welfare benefits section for an additional Welfare Benefits adviser plus clerical support was not approved.

The Board acknowledged that an increase in provision for Financial Inclusion was required however requested that further investigation be undertaken to establish the best way in taking this forward.

- 3.10 The Fairer Scotland Fund team are holding a Financial Inclusion Event on the 5 June to bring together providers of information and advice and services who work with vulnerable people many who have faced or are facing financial exclusion and multiple debts. This is in recognition that financial exclusion and debts are one of the key causes of poverty. The outcomes of this event will be to develop a Financial Inclusion Strategy for Moray, achieve more effective integration and co-ordination among providers and investigate the feasibility of establishing a Financial Inclusion Network to maintain effective communication and co-ordination.
- 3.11 It was agreed that the Fairer Scotland Fund team report back to the Board following this event with revised recommendations on increasing the financial inclusion resource in Moray and to agree a process for monitoring performance of the fund.
- 3.12 The Fairer Scotland Fund team are currently undertaking ongoing primary research with key stakeholders to identify instances of poverty and views of where resource should be targeted. The first draft of the Fairer Scotland Fund strategic assessment has been produced and will be further revised in order to identify key priorities, where to target resource appropriately and develop accurate poverty indicators for Moray.
- 3.13 Following the first round of proposals the Social Inclusion Implementation Group agreed that the current process required revision. A need to develop more specific criteria and relate this to identified priorities from the Strategic Assessment and commission Employability provision as discussed and agreed. It was also suggested that each theme group be approached to nominate 2 members from each group to consider any future proposals presented. A letter outlining these suggested changes will be issued to all theme group chairs and lead officers once approved by the Safer and Stronger Theme Group.
- 3.14 In the meantime interested parties can still submit their ideas to their appropriate theme group or the Fairer Scotland Fund team on the outline proposal form. Once the revised process has been agreed letters outlining the changes will be issued to all theme group chairs and lead officers

4 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Community Plan / Theme Plans / Partner Plans

The Fairer Scotland Fund is aligned to the Single Outcome Agreement and will enable investment in actions to achieve the priorities outlined in the SOA.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Fairer Scotland Fund has been established to assist tackling poverty and deprivation across Scotland, as part of the Concordat between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities.

(c) Resources (Financial, Staffing and Risks)

The allocation has been ring fenced in the first two years of the spending review period to ensure Community Planning Partnership engagement in driving “strategic investment of these resources”. It is envisaged that the ring fencing will be removed in 2010/11 as Single Outcome Agreements are concluded with Community Planning Partnerships.

The funding allocation for Moray from the Fairer Scotland Fund is:

2008/09	£343,000
2009/10	£422,000
2010/11	£500,000

The fund is made up of a number of other funds, which include the Community Regeneration Fund, More Choices More Chances Community Voices Fund and an element of the changing children’s services funds. As stated earlier there are projects still funded by these funds that will be affected by the changes.

The current available budget for allocation of the fund for 2009/2010 is approx £439,000 (this includes funds of £148,728.00 brought forward from 2008/2009 and deduction of staffing commitments, projected running costs and funding already committed as detailed in section 3.3) Following approval of the Board for 2 investment ideas the total fund left to allocate for investment ideas and development of the fund for 2009/10 is £375,804.

All funded provision will be subject to a Service Level Agreement and as indicated in section 3.7 any investment in Employability provision will be subject to the Councils Commissioning process.

(d) Consultations

The Social Inclusion Implementation Group was responsible for assessing the proposals received.

The Council's Principal Accountant was consulted in respect of the financial implications.

Procurement and Contracts of Moray Council will be consulted in the development of the Service Level Agreement and the Commissioning Process.

5. CONCLUSION

The Safer and Stronger Theme group are asked to note progress on the development of the fund. The Theme group is also requested to submit ideas for the investment of the fund in line with the funds key objectives

and the groups key priorities in order that any investment can contribute to SOA outcomes and tackle the root causes of poverty as laid out in the Fairer Scotland Fund Submission. The Safer and Stronger Theme Group are also asked to approve the revised investment process as outlined at section 3.13.

Author of Report: Jacqui Taylor, Fairer Scotland Manager

Background Papers: Fairer Scotland Fund Submission

Ref: