WALSALL SOUTH AREA PANEL

INTERNAL ASSURANCE OF AREA PANEL PROJECTS

Tuesday, 9 February 2016

1. Summary of the Report

1.1 As part of good governance arrangements and to support future audit arrangements, an internal assurance review has been undertaken to ensure that any projects which have been allocated funding through the Area Partnership, have utilised the funding for the purpose for which it was allocated, an internal review of the project documentation has been undertaken. This report sets out the findings.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Walsall South Area Panel:

- Note the findings of the internal review
- Note that there is assurance that projects have utilised funding, for the purpose for which it was allocated and that the relevant documentation has been provided by the project lead / organisation

3. Context

3.1 Six Area Partnerships were established in April 2010. One of the functions of the model is to have an allocation of £40,000 per Area Partnership, which can be used to support local groups / organisations and local activity which address the priorities within the Walsall Plan and the Area Plan. These being:

- Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work
- Improving health including well-being and independence for older people
- Creating safe and sustainable communities – reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in
- Improving safeguarding and the learning and life chances for children and young people, recognising that a person's early years crucially help determine what kind of future they have and ensuring they are appropriately supported into adulthood

3.2 In the original model of Area Partnerships, the responsibility for approving funding allocations lay with the relevant Area Manager. In April 2013, Cabinet approved a revised model of Area Partnerships – 'Devolution through Area Partnerships'. This decision enabled the establishment of Area Panels and responsibility for approving funding allocations would lie with these Committees of the Council.

3.3 Through the Area Partnership Team, the process for recommending any funding applications to the Area Panels for consideration remains. Also, the processing of associated documentation to support the application, any approval paperwork, checking of claims for payments with evidence that the project has been delivered, including milestones / outcomes and related expenditure.

3.4 All recommendations for funding allocations are presented to the Area Panel in the Funding Report, which details the applicant / organisation, amount requested, a summary of the project, dates the project starts / ends, which priority(ies) will be met, any match funding that may be drawn down and the Ward(s) which the project will benefit.

4. Internal Assurance

4.1 To support governance arrangements, an internal review has been undertaken of the project files for all six Area Partnerships.

4.2 Internal audit have supported the design of this work and the outcome will be shared with them.

4.3 Attached at Appendix A is an internal control sheet that monitors when project file documentation have been issued / received and also when payments were made. (Please note that a project may be allocated an amount of funding, however, as the project completes, there may not be a need for all the funding to be claimed – this is detailed in the Funding Report for re-allocation to other funding requests.)

4.2.1 No payments are made without the provision of relevant evidence of milestones / outcomes and expenditure.

4.2.2 Where projects are highlighted 'green', these projects have been completed; where projects are highlighted 'red', these projects were approved for funding, but subsequently did not take place and the funding was returned for re-allocation; where projects are not highlighted, these projects are still to be completed / make a claim.

4.2.3 As can be seen the majority of projects have been completed.

4.3 As part of the programmed audits which are undertaken, an audit of Area Panels and Partnerships was completed in July 2015, with the outcome being 'significant assurance'. This included an audit of governance arrangements and funding processes.

4.4 For information, attached at Appendix B is a map of the Area Partnership, which indicates where funding has been allocated and where the area has benefited. (Please note this was mapped up to the point of when funding was allocated by the September 2015 Area Panel.)

4.5 The Authors of this report are both satisfied that the projects have been undertaken and that the funding has been utilised for the purpose it was allocated.

5. Appendices

Appendix A – Internal Control Spreadsheet – Walsall South Funding 2014 / 15 and 2015 / 16

Appendix B – Map of Walsall South Funding 2014 / 15 and 2015 / 16

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