

Community Chest Evaluation and Review

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Brief

Rochdale Partnership appointed BE Group to evaluate and review the SRB5 Revitalising Inner Rochdale Community Chest Project.

This was needed to inform future direction of the Community Chest in terms of its sustainability and forward planning.

Rochdale's SRB5 Community Chest programme covers the inner areas of Rochdale. It has been running for three years and provides people with an opportunity to deliver regeneration at a local level and increase community involvement.

The Project not only provides funding but also equips those involved with the necessary skills to undertake their project.

Activities

Consultation with variety of individuals undertaken. A number of approaches adopted to cater for the multi-cultural nature of the area:

- Detailed analysis of grant distribution in terms of location, groups and purpose
- Review of grant administration and monitoring systems
- Survey of grant recipients to assess their experiences and highlight areas for improvement
- Discussion using translators to access hard-to-reach groups
- Consultation with SRB5 officers and the Community Forum
- Review of best practice nationwide.

Outcome

The evaluation identified 36 issues including:

- Set clear aims and objectives
- Consider front-end funding to support new groups and seek appropriate lender to underwrite loan fund
- Consider a tiered grant system (with increased upper limit)
- Align programme with other regeneration initiatives, e.g. Neighbourhood Action Plan, Housing Market Pathfinder and Neighbourhood Management
- Provide decision-making training for the Community Forum
- Organise regular networking events for community groups
- Appoint a Development Officer
- Simplify application form and guidance
- Adopt decision-making timetable.

