

**Birmingham City Council Adults and Communities Directorate  
Terms of Reference for Third Sector Appraisal and Assessment Panels  
June 2008**

### **1. Purpose**

A strategic assessment panel and six service appraisal panels will determine funding allocations to the third sector by Birmingham City Council's Adults and Communities Directorate. The panels will consider all bids received by the closing date.

### **2. Delegated powers**

The panels act under the delegated authority of Service Director - Policy, Strategy and Commissioning.

### **3. Role of service appraisal panels**

Six service appraisal panels will score and rank applications, and make recommendations to the strategic assessment panel. The tasks of the appraisal panels are:

- To score and rank the applications according to the agreed criteria, taking account of references.
- To link scoring decisions to the seven outcomes for adults, relevant LAA targets on wellbeing, strategic plans, joint strategic plans, service plans and user priorities.
- To decide where the threshold score (i.e. cut-off point) for funding falls and to advise the strategic assessment panel on which applications are eligible for funding, and which fall below the threshold and are therefore not eligible.
- To moderate their applications based on value for money principles and cost effectiveness.
- To record the process, the scoring, and ranking of applications.
- To call on specialist advice as required.

### **4. Composition of service appraisal panels**

Each appraisal panel will be chaired by a strategic commissioner. The other members will be appropriate commissioning officers from Adults and Communities (including market shaper, contracts manager, operations manager), service user and carer representatives and one third sector representative. Officers from Adults and Communities Third Sector Partnerships Team may attend the panels as non-voting observers.

The service appraisal panels will have a quorum of 3 members, including one commissioner and at least one third sector representative. The panels will be subject to an agreed protocol on conflicts of interest, with all members required to sign a declaration of interest. The panels will have dedicated administrative support.

### **5. Role of strategic assessment panel**

The strategic assessment panel will select and recommend to Cabinet the applications to be funded by Adults and Communities third sector investment, using the scoring, ranking and threshold information received from the appraisal panels.

The assessment panel need not necessarily select applications achieving the highest appraisal score, and can apply a range of criteria in accordance with Adults and

Communities commissioning strategies and the council's corporate priorities. For example, where there is an uneven geographic distribution of services, a lesser scoring application located in an area of need may rank above other higher scoring applications.

## **6. Composition of strategic assessment panel**

The assessment panel will be co-chaired by Head of Wellbeing and Third Sector Partnerships, and Head of Service Market Shaping and Contracting. A maximum of 14 people will sit on the panel including: two operational managers from Adults and Communities, representatives of service users and carers, and three third sector representatives. The panel will have a quorum of 5 members to include at least two third sector representatives. Officers from the Adults & Communities Third Sector Partnership Team may attend this panel as advisors/non-voting observers.

The panel will be subject to an agreed protocol on conflicts of interest, with all members required to sign a declaration of interests. The panel will have dedicated administrative support.

## **7. Conflict of interest and confidentiality**

Members of the assessment panel and the appraisal panels are required to declare any interest they may have in any of the applicant organisations under consideration.

They must also undertake not to disclose any of the information considered at the meeting to any other body or person not present at the panel meeting.

**A separate conflict of interest protocol is in place and all panel members will be subject to this in addition officers of Birmingham Council will be subject to the Officer Code of Conduct.**

## **8. Moderation**

In addition to each appraisal panel's moderation of its own applications, the strategic assessment panel will moderate the results of all the service appraisal panels to ensure consistency across the whole commissioning process. Moderation will include financial constraints. Chairs of the Service Appraisal Panels may attend as advisors.

Any duplicate bids identified will be treated as one application.

## **9. References**

Adults and Communities Third Sector Partnerships Team will check references for all applications. The results will be made available in advance to the appraisal panels to inform their decision taking and evaluation of bids. Each application should have at least one of the two references (of which should be a positive response) in order to be put to the Service Appraisal Panel for appraisal. The second reference will be sought during the appraisal process. If however, a second response is negative then the recommendation and reference findings will be referred to the Co-Chairs of the Strategic Assessment Panel for a decision on whether the recommendation should stand or that it will be removed from the process and declined. If both references are received prior to the Service Appraisal Panel meeting and either/both are negative then these will be referred directly to the Co-Chairs of the Strategic Assessment Panel. A recommendation will be made as to whether then should continue in the appraisal process or be declined.

## **10. Chairing and conduct of the panel meetings**

The chair or co-chairs of the panels will have a casting vote where voting is used. The chairs are accountable for the process to the Service Director – Policy, Strategy and Commissioning.

## **11. Communication**

On completion of the strategic assessment process a report will be compiled by the Head of Service for Market Shaping and Contracting making final recommendations to cabinet. Communication of the final decisions to all applications for funding will take place as soon as possible after that time.

## **12. Feedback to organisations**

Written feedback will be supplied to all applicants in a short pro-forma. As a minimum, the pro-forma will include the application score and the threshold level.