Dear Community First panels

Deadlines for funding recommendations and Community First Plan

(i)This is a reminder that the deadline for panels to submit funding recommendations for this current financial year is March 31st 2013. This is the end of Year 2 of the programme, so panels should ensure they have made recommendations up to the Year 1 and Year 2 total by then. This is equivalent to 42% of your overall allocation.

It will be possible to submit recommendations up to Sunday 31st March at 6pm. Please note that this is also Easter weekend, so the last day you can contact the office in the run up to the deadline will be Thursday 28th March.

It will not be possible to roll over funding into the following year, so if panels have any particular issues relating to this they should contact us at CDF as soon as possible (communityfirst@cdf.org.uk), with the subject of the email **'funding recommendation deadline'**.

(ii) March 31st is also the deadline for the submission of Community First Plans. These will need to be submitted and signed off before panels can make funding recommendations for Year 3 onwards. Guidance on the Plan can be found here : Community plan Again if you have any queries you should contact us at CDF as soon as possible (communityfirst@cdf.org.uk), with the subject of the email **'Community First Plan deadline'**.

What happens next?
After the deadline CDF will be processing all the submitted funding recommendations. We expect to receive thousands of recommendations in the coming weeks, so please note that this will extend the time it takes to process the applications, send out grant acceptance communications and process the high number of expected payments. We would suggest that you advise any projects that you recommend during this period that it will take longer to process their projects and so they should include a longer lead-in period before their activities are due to start. We expect it will take up to four weeks send out grant acceptances to all the recommendations.

CDF expects that it will take most of April to process the recommendations and Plans, so we will notify panels when recommendations can start again, which will be May at the earliest. CDF will also use this time to ensure that all panel websites are live and contain the required information. We will also be updating the guidance documents and online forms and will issue new versions of these in April prior to opening the grant recommendation system.

Webinar support
Please note that CDF have announced dates of some upcoming 'webinars'. These are online meetings which people can access from their home computer. There will be four of these, on the following dates

Date	Time	Topic
Monday 11 March	10am – 12pm	Website support
Wednesday 13 March	2pm – 4pm	General Community First support
Tuesday 19 March	3pm – 5pm	Website support
Friday 22 March	10am – 12pm	Website support

Three of these will provide advice and tips on how to run your Community First panel web pages. The other session will be an open session for any queries on the Community First programme.

On the day you want to joint the session, simply go to either of these web-pages:

- **http://talkaboutlocal.org.uk/joining-a-talk-about-local-webinar/** (copy and paste the link into your browser)
- **http://tinyurl.com/aopnavg** (takes you to the same place but is easier to type in)

This page will have the link to click for that day's webinar, which will take you to the online training room. The online training room will be open about 30 minutes before the publicised start time.

Community Organisers

Some of you will have met Community Organisers at the recent Community First events. The Community Organiser programme is the other current programme being funded by Cabinet Office. They are looking to place Community Organisers in as many Community First areas as possible, so if you know of any local voluntary sector organisations who would be interested in hosting Organisers, please direct them to the following page from the CO website: http://www.cocollaborative.org.uk/resource/become-host.

Events

Finally big thanks to all the panel members who were able to attend and participate in the 17 events we held around England over the last four months. The CDF staff enjoyed meeting so many of their contacts in the flesh, and the panels members certainly enjoyed meeting with their counterparts from around the region. Feedback from the events was overwhelmingly positive, we hope that we will be able to run these events again in the future, and revisit panels at a further stage in their development. If you haven't yet claimed expenses for travelling to an event please click on the
Panel expense link