

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

16th October 2013

## VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME 2013/14

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett, Community Leadership & Partnership inc. Voluntary Sector
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, acting Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	<b>All</b>
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report contains recommendations as to the funding split and themes for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants process for 2014/15.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee are requested to **RECOMMEND** that

**the following themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2014/15 voluntary and community sector grants process: see below for details on themes: these themes link into the Strategic Purposes for Redditch Borough Council – See chart - Appendix 1**

- Independent Communities** = £130,000 – see 3.3.1
- Community Development** = £ 55,000 – see 3.3.2
- Thriving Communities** = £ 20,000 – see 3.3.3
- Community Welfare** = £ 20,000 – see 3.3.4
- Stronger Communities Grant Programme** = £ 15,000 – see 3.3.5
- £1,000 be allocated from the Grants budget for the use by the Grants Team to deliver:**
  - a) **networking and promotional events;**
  - b) **advertising and communication support;**
  - c) **newsletters;**

(See Key Issues 3.0 for Background & full breakdown of theme splits and key project support areas)

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**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

3.1 The proposed splits are based on the Grants budget for 2014/15 being set at £241k (based on no increase on budget from 2013/14)

3.2.1 The total budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2014 /2015 is £241,000.

**Background:**

3.3 The Stronger Communities Grant programme has had a major impact on the grants programme by ensuring a funding stream is available to the community organisations delivering at grass roots level.

3.4 The Grants programme has ensured that the building of a good working relationship with our local third sector & a greater understanding of the issues they face. Demand for support via our local VCS has increased, RBC, s continued support is vital to ensure that the sector can sustain its support in the Community. The Stronger Community's grants have allowed both the Council & Small Community groups greater engagement opportunities.

3.5 For 2014/15 the proposed splits reflect the needs within the local Voluntary & Community Sector, while adding value to groups already working closely with the Borough Council all sectors are having to cut their cloth accordingly, while many funding streams cuts are being initiated. Redditch Borough Councils Grants programme continues to support local organisations delivering much needed services to residents. The themes objectives aim to:

- Support & sustain services already being delivered within the town,
- Support findings already being identified from the Councils Transformation process
- Align with the Council's strategic purposes.

3.3.1

<p><b><u>Independent Communities</u></b> <b><u>Recommended funding = 130k for the Delivery of Projects under the "Independent Communities" Banner</u></b></p> <p><b><u>80k – Investing Grant</u></b> <b><u>To deliver:</u></b> <b><u>Financial and Debt advice within the Town</u></b> <b><u>Free, independent and confidential advice,</u></b></p>
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- ❑ Promoting and raising awareness of services; providing better access through, for example, outreach in local communities, faster appointments; and other measures targeting low-income and disadvantaged groups of people.
- ❑ Ensure clients are fully informed of their options so that they are best placed to make decisions about how to proceed in their situation.
- ❑ Providing advice that is 'consistent with a rights-based approach', i.e. by providing full information of all the options available.
- ❑ Face to Face appointments with home visits where applicable.
- ❑ Signposting & referring to other agencies where necessary.
- ❑ Working closely with department's within the local Council

**30k - Investing grants - Maximum grant of 10k for each project submitted**

**For delivery of on-going support for local services to include outcomes that:**

- ❑ Provide services that support local disadvantaged residents
- ❑ Offering local volunteering opportunities
- ❑ Work closely with partner/counterpart organisations
- ❑ Delivering services that reflect the needs of residents
- ❑ Provide training/up skilling opportunities' for Staff & Volunteers

**20k - Investing Grant**

**For delivery of a financial support project with outcomes that:**

- Support for those in financial difficulties including
- one to one support
- group workshops
- on-going financial independence support
- Outreach project/worker to support residents
- Signposting

**3.3.2**

**Community Development**

**Recommended funding: £55k for the delivery of projects under the "Community Development" Banner.**

**40k Investing Grants – Maximum grant of 40k for a project to deliver: Childcare and Holiday schemes into the Town:**

- ❑ Discounted childcare for local children with specific criteria for discounted places to be allocated to ensure the full benefit is gained from those families who have the highest need.
- ❑ Discounted Holiday play schemes for local children that have outcomes linked into education and health and well-being priorities.

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**15k Investing Grants – Maximum grant of 3k for each project submitted**

**For delivery of projects that support:**

- Learning & Personal Development projects for those on low incomes
- Intergenerational/Cross cultural projects
- Breakfast Clubs
- Local Community Clubs – i.e. Mother & Baby, Older People, Cultural, etc.
- Supporting local residents back into work
- Work Clubs
- Projects that support environmental issues

3.3.3

**Thriving Communities**

**Recommended funding = 20k for the delivery of projects under Thriving Communities**

**20k Investing Grants-Maximum bids for each project submitted of 4k**

For delivery of projects that support the Council's priorities.

- Support for Community improvement projects
- Support for Families with additional needs – ie: ADHD, Autism, Learning difficulties etc.
- Projects to encourage Enterprise in young people
- Projects that increase youth participation
- Project that supports older people
- Projects that supports disadvantaged people in Redditch, ie homelessness,
- Projects that support Anti-social behaviour reduction
- Projects that support reduction in Crime

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3.3.4

<p><b><u>Community Welfare</u></b> <b><u>Recommended funding = 20k for the delivery of projects under Community Welfare Banner – also links into the LSP priorities</u></b></p> <p><b>20k Investing Grants - Maximum bids for each project submitted of 4k</b> For delivery of projects that support the Council's Community welfare priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Projects that support Health &amp; Fitness</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on Mental Health and Support.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dementia /Alzheimer's support projects</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Domestic abuse projects</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Projects that support residents with low/medium level mental health issues</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Projects that tackle alcohol &amp; drug issues in young people</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Projects that support young offenders</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Projects that support environmental issues</li></ul>
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3.3.5

<p><b><u>Stronger Communities - Community Grant Fund – Total £15k - For the delivery of local grassroots community projects/events</u></b> <b>£15k Giving Grants Maximum bid of £500.00 per project submitted in each round</b></p> <p><b>For delivery of projects:</b> Hosted by local community groups - these groups will not need to be formally constituted but will be required to have a recognised role within the community they represent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Community support &amp; participation projects</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Three Rounds at £5000 per round for community grants in 2012/13</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Community groups invited to bid for up to £500 for delivery of local projects/events</li></ul>
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3.4 The Grants programme in 2012/13 supported a 3 year training programme with a total budget of 15k. Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) were successful in their bid to deliver the programme with 4 workshops beginning delivered this year – 2 more workshops are planned before 2014.

3.5 For 2013/14 the stronger communities grants will support over 30 small groups to deliver a wide variety of projects. Currently funded projects include:

- Garden/Environment projects,
- Social & Fun-days
- Bereavements project
- Local History (Needles) project

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### Legal Implications

- 3.6 The Council needs to continue to ensure that it has a transparent and fair grants scheme.
- 3.7 To ensure that we continue to support the sector to move forward and deliver projects that provides value for money.
- 3.8 Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.
- 3.9 There is a further power to make grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

### Service / Operational Implications

- 3.10 Deadlines dates for both the main grants programme and the Stronger Communities grants programme have been set in order to ensure the smooth delivery of the programme. **See appendices 3 & 4 for timescales.**
- 3.11 To enable the Council to deliver its grants programme, Officers will need to continue to work closely with the Communications Team to ensure that a full and informative guide to the new procedure is implemented and that Officers are engaging with the full range of VCS organisations and groups within the local area.
- 3.13 By working closely with BARN & local VCS organisations on delivering our long term training & support, we can ensure that the sector will receive an agreed standard of training with the Council ensuring that we receive value for money. Outcomes initially identified are:
- What impact will developing these skills have on performance?
  - Which skills needs are the most important to long- term success?
  - Which skills needs are the most urgent?
- 3.14.1 Local Authorities will be expected under the “Big Society” banner to support and help build capacity and up-skill those organisations operating within the third sector.
- 3.15 Redditch Borough Council has implemented a Concessionary rents programme. Four VCS organisations have been put through the process,

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with each gaining a concession on their rent. All other VCS organisation's currently occupying property owned by RBC will be taken through the process over the next three years.

- 3.16** The concessionary rent programme recognises the social value that VCS organisations bring to the borough through operating from council properties, and the council's commitment to fostering and demonstrating this value. **Appendices 2: Concessionary Rent Policy**

### Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.16 The 2013/14 grants programme has supported 23 projects from 18 organisations under the main grant fund with 20 projects/events being funded in the first two rounds via the Stronger Communities fund.
- 3.17 The 2013/14 Grants Programme received applications from 39 different organisations, with the programme seeing 8 new organisations applying to the programme who had not applied to this fund previously.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Where needed the Grants officer identifies external funding streams and invites external organisations to host events to raise awareness of the funding streams they have available to the local VCS. Officers have also made themselves available for one to one sessions to support funding applications for both internal and external opportunities. Redditch borough Councils grant programme is widely advertised both locally and county wide.
- 4.3 All highlighted suggestion's for improvement from the recent audit of the grants programme have been implemented.

## **Purpose of Grant Funding**

The Council provides grants to assist the development of a vibrant voluntary and community sector that delivers projects and activities of value to the local community.

Funding will only be provided where it can be demonstrated that a defined impact will be made. Organisations should demonstrate an outcomes focus in applications for funding.

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The Council will require that all grant awards support Council objectives. The specific objectives to be supported will be made clear in all publicity relating to each grant opportunity. Demonstrating support of Council objectives may include:

a) ***Linking grant awards to an approved list of Council priorities, (please see Website for the current list of priorities). The Council also reserve the option of including LSP or other priorities as identified by Redditch Borough Council***

b) The Council choosing one or more specific outcomes in advance that will be achieved with the grant award. This will be particularly appropriate for individual departments wishing to make grants available to support the delivery of a particular service aim

7.7 – Payment schedules will balance the need for the Council to ensure proper accountability for use of public money with appropriate recognition of cash-flow issues that may be experienced by voluntary and community sector organisations. The general principle will be that payment is made in advance of project delivery, with instalment frequency and size commensurate with the overall size of the grant awarded. General guidelines for payment schedules are:

- a) Grants of a total of £1,000 or less will be paid in full in advance of the project being delivered, payment will be made to successful applicants within 1 month of the submission deadline date, with monitoring information required following the project; unless the projects delivery timescales dictate the funding be paid in full.
- b) Grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 will be paid in two instalments of 50% each. The first instalment will be paid in advance of the project being delivered. The second instalment will be paid after satisfactory monitoring information has been supplied on the progress of the project. For projects lasting one year, the second instalment will usually be due to be paid six months after the start of the project.
- c) Grants in excess of £10,000 will be paid by quarterly instalments in advance of project activity. Each instalment will only be released after satisfactory monitoring information has been supplied on progress of the project.
- d) Grant applications to the Voluntary & Community Grant Programme will not be part funded.

4.5 Monitoring will be signed off by Grants Officer before each quarter payment is due, with any concerns being discussed with Chair of Grants Panel or Head of Service.



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4.6 All applications to the Stronger Communities Grants will be assessed by the Grants Panel with the Head of Community Services having final approval of applications to the Stronger Communities Grants.

4.7 Approval timescales will be indicated year on year in conjunction with launch & deadline timescales for the current Grants programme. These will apply to projects commencing 1st April of the following year – allowing successful applicants to place the project into their delivery calendar and to apply for match funding grants and giving unsuccessful applicants feedback and enough time to secure funding from alternative channels.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Priorities

Appendix 2 – Concessionary Rent Policy

Appendix 3 - Timetable – Main Grants Programme

Appendix 4 – Timetable – Stronger Communities Grants

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Policy for Award of Grants by Redditch Borough Council to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations.

Worcestershire Compact: Link to Web-pages:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/vcs-unit/worcestershire-compact.aspx>

## **7. KEY**

- SIG – Shopping, Investing and Giving**
- BME – Black Minority Ethnic**
- LSP – Local Strategic Partnership**
- VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector**
- RBC – Redditch Borough Council**

**‘Place-Shaping’** – Local authorities are strategic leaders in place-shaping responding to residents' ambitions and aspirations and working with partners to deliver relevant services.

**‘Third Sector’** – The voluntary sector or community sector (also non-profit sector) is the sphere of social activity undertaken by organisations that are for non-profit and non-governmental. This sector is also called the third sector.

## **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE  
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