

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

8th September 2014

## VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME 2015/16

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

- 1.1 This report contains recommendations as to the funding split and themes for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants process for 2015/16. See Appendix 1. The theme titles have been updated to align with the Council's Strategic purposes.
- 1.2 In addition the report recommends changes to update & improve the scoring matrix - See Appendix 2.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 1) **the themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2015/16 voluntary and community sector grants process as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- 2) **the scoring matrix be updated as set out in Appendix 2.**

### 3. KEY ISSUES

#### Financial Implications

- 3.1 The proposed splits are based on the Grants budget for 2015/16 being set at £241k (based on no increase on budget from 2014/15).

#### Background

- 3.2 Each year the grants team look at how the Grant Programme can best serve the local VCS while aligning the programme to the Council's Strategic Purposes. For an overview on how the 2014/15 grants programme aligned to the strategic purposes see Appendix 3.

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3.3 For 2015/16 the Stronger Communities grants will support over 30 small groups to deliver a wide variety of projects. Previously funded projects include:

- Arrow Valley Health Walks
- Pop up gallery in vacant shop unit in Kingfisher Shopping Centre
- Breakfast Club
- Community building events (Quiz Night and Party in the Park)
- Parenting course
- Georgiephone
- Ditch Youth Project
- Camping weekend
- Community Champion scheme
- Provide Olympic style mixed martial arts
- Older peoples' choir

A full list of all funded organisations is published on the Council's website.

### **Legal Implications**

3.4 The Council needs to continue to ensure that it has a transparent and fair grants scheme, ensuring that we comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

3.5 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.

3.6 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**

3.7 In response to the recommendations of the recent Voluntary Sector Task Group report, the Grants Panel considered the updating of the scoring matrix. A copy of the updated scoring matrix is attached as Appendix 2.

- Inclusion of the address in the summary in order to identify where organisations are based from.
- Question 3 – added *reputation*

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- Question 6 – added *based in Borough*
- Question 10 – Changed this question to give more flexibility to grants panel when scoring applications.

3.8 The themes and proposed split of funding for the 2015/16 Grants programme have been updated to reflect the Council's Strategic Purposes and customer demand as follows:

<b>Strategic Purpose</b>	<b>Previous theme title</b>	<b>Funding allocation 2013/14</b>	<b>Funding allocation 2014/15</b>
Help me to be financially independent	Independent Communities	£130,000	£145,000
Help me to live my life independently	Community Development	£58,000	£53,000
Provide good things for me to do, see and visit	Thriving Communities	£18,000	£9,000
Keep my place safe and looking good	Community Welfare	£15,000	£15,000
Stronger Communities Grant Programme - 3 rounds per year		£15,000	£15,000

**From the £241,000 budget, £4,000 is retained for the delivery of training to the VCS and to facilitate external funding workshops/events.**

- 3.9 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. The timetable also takes account of the recent Overview and Scrutiny recommendation that sufficient time is given to enable Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to plan constructively for the year ahead. See Appendix 4 for timescales.
- 3.10 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.

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3.11 By working closely with BARN and local VCS organisations on delivering our long term training and 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:

- **Increase volunteers skills in bid writing**
- **Facilitate events that invite external funders to Redditch**
- **Up-skill organisations in public speaking**
- **Encourage partnership working within the Boroughs VCS**
- **Social Media workshops**
- **Event to raise awareness of local VCS organisations**

## **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

3.12 The 2014/15 grants programme has supported 21 projects under the main grant fund with 37 projects/events being funded in the first two rounds via the Stronger Communities fund.

3.13 The 2014/15 Grants Programme received applications from 34 different organisations, with the programme seeing one new organisation applying to the programme who had not applied to this fund previously.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

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 Council's grant programme is widely advertised both locally and county wide.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Themes and funding split  
Appendix 2 – Scoring Matrix Template  
Appendix 3 – Overview of aligning to strategic purposes  
Appendix 4 - Timetable – Main Grants Programme and Stronger Communities Grants

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Local Government Transparency Code 2014
- Voluntary Sector Task Group Report 2014

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