

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

30th March 2015

## VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANT PROGRAMME 2015/16 - REVISED FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett, Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership & Partnership inc. Vol. Sector.
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes.
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Head of Community Services.
Wards Affected	All Wards.
Key Decision: Key.	

### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to consider the recommendation of the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding a grant to a voluntary sector organisation as part of the 'Help me to be financially independent' theme for 2015/16. The Executive Committee originally awarded the grant to the Redditch CAB, however the organisation ceased its operation in February 2015. The available budget for this grant is £75,000 and applications are to be considered by the Grants Panel at its meeting on 25th March 2015.
- 1.2 In addition the Committee is also asked to consider the £13,332 underspend from the grant awarded to the Redditch CAB for 2014/15.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **the Financial Independence grant of £75,000 be awarded as per the recommendation from the Grants Panel meeting held on 25th March 2015;**
- 2)
  - a) **that the 2014/15 underspend of £13,332 be allocated to the Council's Framework Agreement for the provision of debt and budgeting Advice; OR**
  - b) **that the underspend of £13,332 be identified as a saving and be put in to balances.**

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**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The total budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2015/16 is £241,000. Executive Committee on 20th January 2015 approved that £182,060 be awarded for 2015/16 and of this amount £75,000 was allocated to Redditch CAB under the Financial Independence Theme. However, due to the closure of Redditch CAB this grant was never administratively awarded to the organisation.
- 3.2 Redditch CAB were awarded a £80,000 grant for 2014/15. With the CAB service ceasing to operate at the end of January, there was an underspend in this grant of £13,332. This equates to two months payments i.e. February and March 2015.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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**

- 3.5 Executive Committee on 20th January 2015 approved a recommendation from the Grants Panel that Redditch CAB be awarded £75,000 under the grants to voluntary bodies theme 'Help me to be financially independent'. The grant was for the financial year 2015/16. On the 2nd February 2015 the Redditch CAB ceased its operation due to financial difficulties. The Redditch CAB were the only organisation to submit a grant application under the £75,000 Help me to be Financially Independent pot.
- 3.6 In addition Redditch CAB were awarded a £80,000 grant for 2014/15. With the CAB service ceasing to operate at the end of January, there was an underspend in this grant of £13,332.

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3.7 Under Urgent Business powers it was agreed that due to the demand for this service from local residents that the grant be re-advertised to the voluntary sector for 5 weeks during February/March 2015. A Grants Panel meeting is to be held on 25th March in order that a recommendation can be made to this Committee on the awarding of the Grant. Due to the timescales for the circulation of this report, the Panel's recommendation will be circulated at the meeting.

3.8 In respect of the underspend in the Redditch CAB grant for 2014/15 of £13,332, Members are asked to consider the following two options on the re-allocation of this money:-

a) The funding be put in to earmarked reserves for 2015/16 and allocated to the Council's Framework Agreement for the provision of debt and budgeting advice. This Framework was established during 2014/15 and the Council entered into an Agreement with four providers to deliver debt counselling or money advice and budgeting training to help vulnerable households to overcome the financial problems in their lives. The funding for the Agreement is comprised of Essential Living Fund (ELF) and Early Help money. However, due to the reduction in funding to the Early Help Service in 2015/16 this contribution will cease. In addition the ELF funding is also reduced in 2015/16. By allocating the £13,332 to this Framework it would enable this Agreement to continue for a longer period of time.

OR

b) The funding be identified as a saving and put in to balances.

3.9 The Panel consider the grant application in accordance with the Policy for Award of Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (Grants Policy) which was approved by Full Council on the 17th October 2011.

**Human Resources implications**

3.10 None identified.

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

- 3.11 By supporting the VCS organisations to successfully identify alternative/match funding we can help mitigate total reliance on Redditch Borough Council's grant programme for many VCS organisations allowing them to explore other funding streams. This will allow Redditch Borough Council's grants programme to move forward year on year.
- 3.12 The Grants process facilitates engagement with and support for more marginalised people and promotes equality and diversity issues within the local authority.
- 3.13 Value can be added to the local VCS by ensuring transparency of grant-giving practices thus promoting fairness and diversity. See background papers.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 All successful grant applicants are required to sign a terms and conditions form prior to the release of any funding. Applicants are required to attend quarterly monitoring meetings with a requirement that a minimum of one member of the organisation is in attendance at any training/workshop sessions provided under the Training & Support programme. Members of the Grants Panel will be invited to attend events and projects throughout 2015/16 that are supported via the grants programme.
- 4.2 All appropriate documentation pertaining to the Grants process is retained and readily available where requested.

## **5. APPENDICES**

None.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Redditch Borough Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy.

## **7. KEY**

VCS - Voluntary and Community Sector.  
LSP - Local Strategic Partnership.

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