

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

12th September 2017

VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME 2018/19

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett, Community Leadership & Partnership inc. Voluntary Sector
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All
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 2018/19. See Appendix 1. The theme titles are aligned with the Council's Strategic Purposes.
- 1.2 The Executive Committee is asked to consider a change to the Help Me to Live My Life Independently £35k pot for discounted childcare to widen out the scope of this theme to enable organisations to bid for funding for general projects focussed on children and young people.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is requested to RECOMMEND that

the themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2018/19 voluntary and community sector grants process as set out in Appendix 1.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The current voluntary and community sector grants budget is set at £240,000. This report recommends the continuation of this budget allocation in 2018/19. The £75,000 Investing Grant which is part of this funding is currently built into the 3 year contract for Financial and Problem Solving Services which was awarded in March 2017 to Citizens Advice.

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Background

- 3.2 Each year the Grants Team look at how the Grants Programme can best serve the local VCS while aligning the programme to the Council's Strategic Purposes. For 2018/19 the Major Grants pot will have scope to fund £146,000 worth of projects.
- 3.3 The Grants Programme also includes the Stronger Communities Grants which are smaller grants of up to £500 which enables small groups to deliver a wide variety of projects. There is £15,000 worth of funding available for this pot. Examples of projects funded to date for 2017/18 include:
- Friendship and support group at Winyates;
 - Tidy Lives project to tackle issues around hoarding;
 - Babysitting course for young people;
 - Community craft sessions; and
 - Wellbeing Day at a local hospice.

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 The themes and proposed split of funding for the 2018/19 Grants Programme was last updated in September 2016 and reflects the Council's Strategic Purposes and customer demand. During 2017, the

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Mental Health Services for Young People Scrutiny Task Group recommended from their review that a new theme be added to the Grants Programme for projects which help people experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems. The Executive Committee did not endorse this recommendation but it was stipulated that effort should be made to promote the fact that mental wellbeing issues could be tackled through applications for projects across all of the current themes.

- 3.8 The Grants Team has taken this into consideration and will aim to achieve this by: expanding the guidance notes to make it explicit that projects focussing on good mental health and wellbeing are welcomed across the themes; make sure that this is highlighted in the workshop event which is held in October at the launch of the Grants Programme; and ensure that this is explained to any organisations or groups that seek advice about the Grants Programme, its themes and the types of projects which fit the conditions for each theme.
- 3.9 Every year, Officers review the themes for the Grants Programme with a view to ensuring that they are still relevant and fit the Council's Strategic Purposes. Currently, under the Strategic Purpose of Help Me to Live My Life Independently, the Council awards £35k for organisations providing low cost discounted childcare and play schemes. Whilst this type of service provision fits broadly within the spirit of a number of the Strategic Purposes, it is service delivery specific. The remainder of the other pots available in the Grants Programme do not fund whole service delivery. However, where they have done in the past, i.e. in the case of the Financial and Problem Solving Advice service, a move has been made to contract rather than grant fund them. It is therefore suggested that this theme area be tweaked slightly and opened out to invite bids for funding for general projects whose target audience is children, young people and families. If this were to be approved it is suggested that the remaining £30k for the other part of the Help Me to Live My Life Independently funding theme be targeted at adults and older people.
- 3.10 In addition, it has been found over previous years that the £10K pot available under the Help Me to Be Financially Independent Strategic Purpose for delivery of financial independence projects aimed at children and young people has been undersubscribed. If Members agree to re-profile the £35k as detailed in the paragraph above, it is suggested that £5k from the Financially Independent Strategic Purpose Theme be added to this to make the pot up to £40k. A further £1,000 from this pot will also be moved to the Stronger Communities Programme Pot to make this up to £16,000 for the year.
- 3.11 Officers therefore propose that this funding for 2018/19 is as follows:

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Strategic Purpose	Funding allocation 2017/18	Funding Allocation 2018/19
Help me to be financially independent	<p>£75,000 rolled into the 3 year contract awarded to Citizens Advice (Year 1).</p> <p>£10,000 awarded for projects which provide preventative projects around financial issues for children and young people</p>	<p>£75,000 rolled into the 3 year contract awarded to Citizens Advice (Year 2).</p> <p>£4,000 awarded for projects which provide preventative projects around financial issues for children and young people.</p>
Help me to live my life independently	<p>£35,000 for discounted childcare provision</p> <p>£30,000 for projects tackling a range of issues under this theme at any target audience.</p>	<p>£40,000 (£5,000 moved from the Strategic Purpose pot above) for projects tackling issues relating to children, young people and families.</p> <p>£30,000 for projects tackling issues relating to adults and older people.</p>
Provide good things for me to do, see and visit	£6,000	£6,000
Keep my place safe and looking good	£15,000	£15,000
Help me run a successful business	£50,000	£50,000
Stronger Communities Grant Programme - 3 rounds per year	£16,000	£16,000 (£1,000 moved from Help Me to be Financially Independent pot).

From the £240,000 budget, £4,000 is retained for the delivery of training to the VCS and to facilitate external funding.

- 3.12 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:
- **Increase volunteers skills in bid writing**
 - **Facilitate events that invite external funders to Redditch**
 - **Encourage partnership working within the Boroughs VCS**
 - **Event to raise awareness of local VCS organisations**

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.14 The 2017/18 Grants Programme has supported 20 projects under the main grant fund with 21 projects/events being funded in the first two rounds via the Stronger Communities fund.
- 3.15 The 2017/18 Grants Programme received 43 applications from organisations, with the Programme seeing several 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 Council's grant programme is widely advertised both locally and county wide.
- 4.2 The Council has an approved Grants Policy which clearly sets out how grants are awarded. It alleviates the risk to the Council from any organisations receiving funding and which then subsequently closes. It also encourages organisations to be not solely reliable on this grant funding.

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5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Themes and funding split

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Local Government Transparency Code 2014
- Voluntary Sector Task Group Report 2014
- Reference Executive Committee report 2010

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