

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

11th December 2018

POLICY FOR COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Bush, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Town Centre and Commercialism
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 Members are requested to consider a draft Policy and Councillor Guidance notes for the recently approved Councillor Community Grants Scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is requested to RESOLVE that

- 1) the attached Policy and Guidance Notes for the Councillor Community Grants Scheme found in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report be approved, and implemented for the 2019/20 Councillor Community Grants Scheme.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 On 19th November 2018, Full Council agreed to change the way in which the Council allocates grant funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Redditch, moving away from awarding funding through a corporate competitive grant giving process to one where each Ward Councillor has a designated budget to propose spend on projects across Redditch and within their Ward.
- 3.2 This change means that the current VCS Grants Policy is now out of date. A new Policy has therefore been written to reflect the changes in the scheme and sets out the overarching parameters that the scheme must work within. In addition there is a set of guidance notes for Councillors which explains the process in a step by step fashion. It was agreed by Full Council on 19th November that this new Policy and

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guidelines be considered and agreed at a future Executive Committee meeting. The new policy and guidelines are found in Appendix 1 and 2.

- 3.3 Some elements of the previous policy have been maintained within this new policy. Stipulations around the types of groups and the types of projects the Council will fund have not fundamentally changed and so have been set out in the new Policy just as they were in the previous policy.
- 3.4 In addition, feedback about the new scheme which was received by the VCS and other stakeholders has been considered and used to inform some of the new guiding principles in the Policy.

Financial Implications

- 3.5 The Executive Committee has agreed that the Councillor Community Grant Scheme has a budget of £145,000 for 2019/20. Each Councillor will receive £5,000 to spend on projects being delivered in their own ward or in wards across the town.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 The Council needs to continue to ensure that it has a transparent and fair grants scheme, ensuring that we comply with the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 Local Authorities must comply with the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code and Best Value duties
- 3.10 The scheme will enable the Council to incur this expenditure in compliance with these statutory requirements. Individual members do not have delegated authority to make payments but can propose a payment from the sum 'allocated' to them to support organisations and projects which meet the Council's VCS Grants Programme Policy,

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which will be signed off by the Head of Community Services who holds the corporate grants budget.

Customer / Equalities Implications

- 3.11 One of the objectives of the Councillor Community Grants Scheme Policy is to ensure that proposals for funding are dealt with equitably. It makes clear to Councillors the rules of the scheme so that they can allocate funding in a transparent and fair way.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Councillor Community Grants Scheme Policy will be implemented to alleviate a number of risks to the Council including funding being directed to inappropriate organisations or projects and risks from any organisations receiving funding which then subsequently close. The Guidance Notes set out the process Councillors should follow to allocate their £5,000 of the Grants budget correctly and appropriately.
- 4.2 The VCS Grants Coordinator is available to discuss this process both with VCS groups interested in applying and with Councillors who are looking to allocate the funding. They will be able to help both parties get the best out of this process which should assist in mitigating risks for the Council.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Policy for the Councillor Community Grants Scheme
Appendix 2 – Councillor Guidance Notes for the Councillor Community Grants Scheme.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- VCS Grants Programme 2019-20 Executive Report – October 2018
- Local Government Transparency Code 2014
- Voluntary Sector Task Group Report 2014
- Reference Executive Committee report 2010

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