

Executive Committee

No Specific Ward Relevance

10th March 2010

VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT APPLICATIONS 2010 - 2011

(Report of the Head of Community Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

The committee is asked to consider the recommendations of the Grants Assessment Panel in awarding grants to voluntary sector organisations for 2010 - 2011. The grants for this year include applications from the five organisations that were formerly "Core Funded" as it was not possible to implement the "shopping" element of the new Grants Policy within the available timescale. The total budget available for grants is £244,800 and applications totalling £391,966 have been received.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **grants be awarded to voluntary sector organisations as detailed in paragraphs 5.4 of this report, subject to Council approval of the budget.**
- 2) **£3,000 be donated to Redditch Arts Council for 2010/11**
- 3) **The policy on funding the voluntary and community sector Organisations be reviewed**

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications

Financial

- 3.1 The total budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2010 – 2011 is £244,800.

Legal

- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 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.

Policy

- 3.4 The grants process is in accordance with the Policy for Award of Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (Grants Policy) previously presented to the Executive Committee and Council.

Risk

- 3.5 There is a risk that allocated funds may not be used for the purposes for which they are allocated. To mitigate this risk, the Grants Panel will ensure that appropriate monitoring and reporting procedures are followed and that amounts over £1,000 are paid in instalments, as detailed in the Grants Policy.
- 3.6 There is a risk that the Council will be criticised for failing to support certain projects or organisations. To mitigate this risk, the Grants Panel used an objective scoring mechanism to formulate their funding recommendations, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.7 A number of grant applications have indicated that their projects will tackle the issue of climate change and impact on high levels of domestic energy consumption.

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4. Background

- 4.1 The total grant funding available to voluntary organisations for 2010/11 is £244,800.
- 4.2 The Council has adopted the Shopping, Investing and Giving funding framework.
- 4.3 “Shopping” refers to procurement and contractual arrangements with external providers to deliver services on behalf of the Council that the Council has a statutory duty to provide or priority areas the Council wishes to invest in.
- 4.4 It has not been possible to implement the Shopping element for 2010/11 in the short timescale since the Grants Policy was approved by Council. Therefore, for 2010/11 the five organisations that were

previously core-funded have been asked to submit applications for funding for 2010/11 at a level not above their current funding.

4.5 Applications for grant funding were required to have a strong link to at least one of the six themes set out in the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy. These are:

- a) Communities that are safe and feel safe
- b) A better environment for today and tomorrow
- c) Economic success that is shared by all
- d) Improving health and well being
- e) Meeting the needs of children and young people
- f) Stronger communities.

4.6 The Grants Panel met on 15th February 2010 to consider the applications.

5. **Key Issues**

5.1 A total of 26 applications were received requesting a total of £392,686. This was £147,886 more than the funds available for allocation.

5.2 An annual donation of £3,000 had been made to the Redditch Arts Council for a number of years to support small projects. Officers advised that they had not submitted a grant application as this had not been raised with them or with the Executive. The Panel agreed that the donation should be given for 2010/11 but that in future the Redditch Arts Council should be required to make an application for a grant.

5.3 Applications were screened to ensure that they met the criteria. Three applications were rejected without scoring as they did not meet the criteria.

- a) The Stop Partnership is a private company so did not meet the criteria for a grant.
- b) The Friends of Southcrest Woods had requested money for improvements to Council owned land. The Head of Environmental Services had been consulted and had confirmed that they worked closely with this group who had been given a remit to seek external funding. This did not include applying for a grant from the Council as any Council funding would come from the Capital Landscape budget.
- c) An application had been made on behalf of the Community Forum for £15,000 to be distributed to member organisations

via an application process in the same way that funding originally allocated to MECA/RICA had been redistributed in 2009/10. The application was rejected as it did not meet the criteria and Members felt that the Forum could apply for grant on specific projects via the current process.

- 5.4 The grants panel considered each of the remaining applications and recommend that grants are awarded to the following organisations:

Organisation	Amount	Details
Where Next Association	£19,000	Small social enterprise businesses in which clients with learning difficulties gain work experience and life skills training.
Age Concern Redditch District	£7,500	Information and advice to older people in Redditch by telephone and to those visiting the office in Easemore Road. Enquiries cover a wide range of subject's e.g. affordable warmth, income maximisation, access to other services and services provided by Age Concern.
Redditch Citizens' Advice Bureau	£90,000	To provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice for the people of Redditch.
The Sandycroft Wellbeing Centre	£20,000	Various programmes offering support to women, children, families, older persons and providing a designated 'Hate Crime Centre'.
Redditch Play Council	£53,000	To help provide care and play for approximately 15,000 child places, inclusive of children with special needs and continued support to parents.
Worcestershire Credit Union (T/A Black Pear)	£10,500	Training, IT upgrades and marketing costs to implement Saving Gateway accounts in line with the Government scheme.
Batchley Support Group	£7,030	Domestic Violence Training & Signposting Service. A project looking at domestic violence enabling women to become peer mentors.

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Organisation	Amount	Details
NewStarts	£8,000	Assistance with furnishing properties, with recycled furniture, in RBC area for tenants on benefits or very low incomes - referrals received from RBC Housing Options, CAB, YMCA, Lifeways, Night Stop, Turning Point.
Astwood Bank Scouts & Guides	£6,732	Purchase of a new marquee to use for their own camps and events and that can be hired out to raise funds for the group
Feckenham Community Shop Association Limited	£5,000	To expand the not-for-profit village community shop which opened in January 2009 in order to provide more retail space and create a Coffee Shop area.
Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association Forces Help	£1,600	Costs involved in cases, visit and written/IT and telephone exchanges with eligible clients and/or charities and statutory authorities.
North Worcestershire Dial	£12,500	To employ a part time Information Officer who will be based at the Age Concern Advice Centre in the former Market who will support both Dial and Age Concern volunteers. Dial will also co-ordinate outreach activities in the town.

- 5.5 The Panel were concerned with the number of applications for the funding of new employees and the lack of clarification on how these posts would be sustainable. Members felt that the current policy should now be reviewed by officers.
- 5.6 Members considered it is necessary to ensure the “shopping” element of the policy is implemented in good time for the 2011/12 grants process and areas for shopping should be identified without delay.
- 5.7 Members felt that there should be a limit set on the level of grant permitted under the “giving” element, for example £10,000.
- 5.8 There is a need to look at a mechanism for funding projects such as those carried out by the Community Forum in 2009/10.

6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - None.
- Community Safety - “Communities that are safe and feel safe” is one of the themes in determining grant allocations for 2010/11.
- Health - “Improving health and well being” is one of the themes in determining grant allocations for 2010/11.
- Human Resources - None identified.
- Social Exclusion - Three of the themes in determining grant allocations for 2010/11 contribute to reducing social exclusion. These are “economic success that is shared by all”, “meeting the needs of children and young people” and “stronger communities”.
- Environment / Sustainability - “A better environment for today and tomorrow” is one of the themes in determining grant allocations for 2010/11.

7. Lessons Learnt

The current policy promotes larger grant requests by allowing full cost recovery and it was felt that for the ‘Giving’ element this should not be included. The ‘Shopping’ element must be introduced for 2011/12 process to ensure Council resources are used in an effective manner.

8. Background Papers

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

9. Consultation

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Matthew Bough, Housing Policy & LSP Manager, who can be contacted on extension 3120 (e-mail: matthew.bough@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Scoring Mechanism

12. Key