

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 November 2010

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS POLICY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllrs Carole Gandy and Michael Braley
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway, Head of Community Services
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider changes to the Grants Policy 2010, to ensure the Council's voluntary sector grant funding provides value for money and increased access for voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 1.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is also requested to consider the option for allocating themes and percentages for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants process for 2011/12.

2. Options

- 1) **Review the updated Voluntary Sector Grants Policy attached to the report at Appendix 1**
- 2) **consider the option for themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2011/12 voluntary and community sector grants process.**
- 3) **consider the option for funding being made available from the main Grants scheme to deliver a support programme to the VCS organisations**
- 4) **consider the option for authority be delegated to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Grants Panel, to agree the allocation of community grants under the Local Strategic Partnership 'Stronger Communities' theme.**

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3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There is increasing awareness of the role the Voluntary and Community Sector can and does play in local communities, in particular contributing to community empowerment, local partnerships and the design and delivery of public services. By adopting a pro-active plan of engagement with the local VCS, Redditch Borough Council will be in a position to support significant improvements in the way that it works with the third sector to achieve stronger more sustainable communities and better outcomes for local people.
- 3.2 Following an Overview and Scrutiny Committee review in 2008, a more transparent and inclusive grants scheme was agreed. The 2010 Grants Policy has been reviewed taking on board issues raised by Officers, the Grants Panel and VCS organisations.
- 3.3 To ensure that the Council moves forward and delivers grants that provide value for money, Officers have suggested changes to the current policy (see Appendix 1) that will allow the sector to grow and build stronger partnerships both with Redditch Borough Council and other organisations and meet the long term needs of the local VCS.
- 3.4 Redditch Borough Council can help facilitate the building of effective relationships with our local VCS organisations, who will then have the opportunity to contribute to the Council's priorities by improving local services; strengthening democracy; achieving increased value for money; and in leadership and 'place-shaping'.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Council needs to ensure that it has a transparent and fair grants scheme. This policy relates to the 'investing' and 'giving' element of the funding framework.
- 4.2 The 'Shopping' element forms part of the Council's procurement process. The Grants scheme should support and encourage the local VCS community to grow and become sustainable. The Council will deliver a Support Package to assist VCS organisations to become self sustaining / funding which in turn will build capacity and the skill base within the Sector, thus increasing the viability of well managed Voluntary Sector organisations.

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- 4.3 Officers are working with the Council's Economic Development and Procurement Teams to enable collaborative working to take place with external funders and our local VCS organisations / groups to provide the VCS with the skills and knowledge to become sustainable.
- 4.4 It is proposed that £2,000 should be allocated from the grants budget for the use by the Grants Team to enable delivery of:
- Workshops, networking and promotional events
 - Advertising and communication support
 - Newsletters
 - Support packages.
- 4.5 To enable the Council to deliver its grants programme, Officers will need 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.
- 4.6 There is a need to support and up skill the vibrant Redditch VCS for growth. Working with the sector Officers can reduce the reliance on Redditch Borough Council for grants, which in turn will help the organisations to become self sufficient and give them a broader base of funding streams to help build and sustain them.
- 4.7 Local Authorities will be expected under the "Big Society" banner to support and help build capacity and up-skill those organisations operating within the third sector.
- 4.8 The 'Shopping' element of the funding framework does not form part of this Policy as the procurement of services is dealt with by the Council's Procurement Strategy. Officers are identifying how they can work with the VCS to ensure they are engaging with the sector to look at delivery via Redditch Borough Council's procurement process.
- 4.9 Officers are proposing the level of split between the relevant themes based on the current priorities and needs of the Borough. Following the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the current economic climate it was considered that the largest funding stream should be for the priority of enterprising community.

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- 4.10 Officers considered that the remaining themes and priorities had significant mainstream funding in tackling issues and there were fewer opportunities for the VCS to make impacts on the outcomes of these.
- 4.11 After reviewing the 2010/11 grants programme, Officers noted that there were no applications from smaller community groups. For the 2011/12 grant programme, Officers propose a mechanism for funding smaller community projects and to put into place a funding pot to ensure the Council meets the needs of these grassroots organisations for 2011/12.
- 4.10 Below are the proposed timescales for the 2011/12 Grant programme. By adopting the proposed allocation of grants for 2011/12, Redditch Borough Council's grants programme will have the opportunity to support 20 projects from the main grant themes with up to 18 community grants being allocated throughout 2011/12.

Process for Main grants programme	Timescale
Launch of the 2011/12 Grant Process	Tuesday 14 th December 2010 Update timetable per conversation
Application deadline	4.00pm Thursday 20 th January 2011
Initial screening out of ineligible applications	Friday 22 nd January 2011
Full assessment of applications by Grants Panel	February 2011
Executive Committee	17 th March
Successful and unsuccessful applicants informed	21st March
First instalment of funding released	1 st April 2011

Process for Community Grant programme	Timescale
Launch - 1 st Round	Tuesday 14 th Dec 2010
1 st Application deadline for projects to commence from April 1 st (Funds Released)	4pm, Thursday 20th January 2011
Launch - 2nd Round – Theme	Monday 14 th March
2 nd Application deadline for projects to commence from July 1 st (Funds Released)	4pm Friday 8 th April 2011
Launch - 3 rd Round - Theme	Monday 20 th June
3 rd Application deadline for projects to commence from 3 rd October (Funds Released)	4pm Friday 15 th July
Assessment of applications	Within 14 working days of deadline
Successful and unsuccessful applicants informed	Within 21 working days of deadline

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5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2011/12 is £241,000. The proposed provision of £2,000 to deliver support and events throughout 2011/12 will leave £239,000 available to allocate as grant to outside bodies..

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Policy for Award of Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (Grants Policy) previously was agreed by Executive Committee on 10th June 2009 and Full Council on the 22 June 2009.

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 Enterprising Communities – Recognising the value of the Third Sector as an integral part of shaping and delivering better services for the citizens of Redditch. The Council can be flexible in its approach to partnership and funding so as to recognise the Third Sector's role in the sustainability of delivery of public services.
- 8.2 Safe – Specific projects that will be delivered to support and raise awareness of issues that affect Redditch citizens.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY
CONSIDERATIONS**

There is a risk that the Council could be criticised for failing to support the local Third Sector organisations or community groups in up-skilling and

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building the capacity to become self sustaining. To mitigate this risk, Officers propose to put into place a provision of a support package delivered by the Grant Co-ordinator to help build capacity, skills and options of alternative funding streams for the VCS organisations that are looking to strengthen their long-term future.

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

Communities' expectations are rising and require services tailored to the needs of local areas and residents. By supporting the VCS organisations that receive funding from the grants scheme the Council can help them pro-actively source and successfully bid for alternative funding allowing the grants fund to move forward year on year to support new and expanding VCS organisations to deliver timely services / projects / events to the residents of Redditch.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The Grants process facilitates engagement with and support for more marginalised people and promotes equality and diversity issues within the local authority.

Value can be added to the local VCS by ensuring transparency of grant-giving practices thus promoting fairness and diversity.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

12.1 Selection of successful applications will follow scoring criteria to ensure value for money is achieved.

12.2 The 'Shopping' element of the Grants process will be delivered via the Council's procurement process. Training and awareness of the process will be built into the support package.

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

None identified.

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

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15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Members of the Grants Panel will be required to attend quarterly panel meetings.

16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

None identified.

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

18. LESSONS LEARNT

- 18.1 The application forms and guideline documents have been updated. This will give applicants clearer guidelines on the grants they are applying for and what information they need to submit and allows a smoother reviewing process of applications.
- 18.2 The previous policy did not promote or engage with small community groups and, with only having one bidding round, small events / projects missed out on funding as projects were required to be designed several months before their inception.
- 18.3 By not previously having a designated Grants Officer the monitoring of the grants scheme had been minimal. This did not allow the grants scheme to reach a wider range of VCS organisations and add value to the Council's priorities. In order to cultivate an atmosphere of trust and partnership working within the VCS, it has been recognised that the support of a Grants Officer will be invaluable to ensure the long-term strength and success of Redditch Borough Council's grant scheme.

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 19.1 A workshop has been booked for November to engage with VCS organisations to help up-skill and support bid writing and the grant making process.
- 19.2 An event in December 2010 will be held to launch the new grants rounds for 2011/12. This event will be held at the Town Hall and will target all local VCS organisations. The event will include a presentation on how the grants are allocated in 2011/12 and will have a provision for

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organisations to access support and advice from Redditch Borough Council's Officers and BARN. Officers will also be surveying the groups to see where they historically go for advice and guidance on grants.

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder(s)	
Chief Executive	
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	
Head of Service	
Head of Resources	
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	
Corporate Procurement Team	

21. WARDS AFFECTED

All

22. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy

Appendix 2 – Proposed Themes and Percentages

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

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Worcestershire Compact: Link to Web-pages:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/vcs-unit/worcestershire-compact.aspx>

24. KEY

BME – Black Minority Ethnic

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

‘Place-Shaping’ -- Local authorities are strategic leaders in place-shaping responding to residents' ambitions and aspirations and working with partners to deliver relevant services.

‘Third Sector’ –The voluntary sector or community sector (also non-profit sector) is the sphere of social activity undertaken by organisations that are for non-profit and non-governmental. This sector is also called the third sector.

VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Appendix 1

See attached Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy

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Appendix 2

**55% allocated to Enterprising Communities -
Total: 130k for the Delivery of Projects under the “Enterprising
Communities” Banner.**

<p align="center">90k – Investing Grant</p>	<p align="center">To deliver: Financial and Debt advice within the Town</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> With a commitment to help people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing: <input type="checkbox"/> Free, independent and confidential advice.
<p align="center">40k - Investing grants - Maximum grant of 10k for each project submitted</p>	<p align="center">To deliver: projects under the Enterprising Communities theme:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Providing supported employment, work experience and training to people disadvantaged by learning difficulties or other special needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Information and advice services for Elderly residents. <input type="checkbox"/> Projects to promote savings schemes within local schools and for people on lower incomes. <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting equality of opportunities for people from black, Asian or any other ethnic minority group.

**Sub Theme - 25% allocated to Education & Learning Development -
Total: £60k for the delivery of projects under the “Education” Banner.**

<p align="center">50k Investing grant</p>	<p align="center">To deliver: Childcare and Holiday schemes into the Town</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discounted childcare for local children with specific criteria for discounted places to be allocated to ensure the full benefit is gained from those families who have the highest need. <input type="checkbox"/> Discounted Holiday play schemes for local children that have outcomes linked into education and health and well being priorities.
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<p align="center">10k Investing Grants - Maximum grant of 2k for each project submitted</p>	<p align="center">For delivery of projects that support: Young people's participation in positive activities within Redditch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Education activities on Arts, culture and diversity <input type="checkbox"/> Working with disabled children <input type="checkbox"/> Raising awareness with 13 to 18 yrs on volunteering opportunities and working with the community
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**Sub theme - 8% allocated to "Safe/Clean & Green" -
Total: 20k for the delivery of projects under the "Safe / Clean & Green" Banner.**

<p align="center">20k Investing Grants Maximum bids for each project submitted of 5k</p>	<p align="center">For delivery of projects that support the Council's Safe / Clean & Green priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support for victims of Domestic violence with a focus on younger people and the BME <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing environment crime <input type="checkbox"/> Re-offending with a focus on getting women ex offenders into work Respect and responsibility activities with young people.
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**Sub theme - 8% allocated to "Health and Well being" -
Total: 20k allocated for the delivery of projects under the Health & Well being
Banner – This can be linked to the LSP priorities.**

<p align="center">20k Investing Grants Maximum bids for each project submitted of 4k</p>	<p align="center">For delivery of projects that support the Council's Health & Well being priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> With focus on Adult/Childhood Obesity . <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in Adult participation in Sport. <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing under 18 conception rate. <input type="checkbox"/> Health awareness initiatives within the older community. <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, cultural and reminiscence activities for the older community. Working with the younger generation to raise awareness of history and culture. <input type="checkbox"/> Projects that support Veterans to readjust within the community.
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**Stronger Communities - Community Grant Fund – Total £9k -
For the delivery of grassroots community projects/events**

<p>£9k Giving Grants Maximum bid of £500.00 per project submitted in each round</p>	<p>For delivery of projects that that have a clearly identified need within the community working in partnership with Community groups Redditch Borough Council can support this grassroots sector - these groups will not need to be formally constituted but will be required to have a recognised role within the community they represent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ £9,000 for community projects❑ Three Rounds at £3000 per round for community grants in 2011/12❑ Community groups invited to bid for up to £500 for delivery of community projects at each round.❑ Authority to approve projects that are within the criteria set by the Council.
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