

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2nd December 2010

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS POLICY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllrs Carole Gandy, Leader of the Council and Michael Braley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway, Head of Community Services
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Executive 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 The Executive Committee is also requested to recommend the themes for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants process for 2011/12.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

- 1) the updated Voluntary Sector Grants Policy attached to the report at Appendix 1 be approved;
- 2) the following themes and percentages of funding be allocated for the 2011/12 voluntary and community sector grants process:
 - **Enterprising Communities** - 55% = £130,000
 - **Safe/ Clean & Green** - 8% = £ 20,000
 - **LSP theme - Health and Wellbeing** - 8% = £ 20,000
 - **LSP theme - Education** - 25% = £ 60,000
 - **LSP theme – Stronger Communities** - 4% = £ 9,000
- 3) **£2,000 be re-allocated from the existing Grants budget for the use by the Grants Team to deliver:**
 - **workshops, networking and promotional events;**
 - **advertising and communication support;**
 - **newsletters; and**

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- support packages;

and

the Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that, subject to the Council's approval of the above recommendations 1) & 2),

- 4) 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.**

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.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 The Investing element of Redditch Borough Council's grant scheme may during the application process become undersubscribed. In order for the grant funding to remain a positive supporting scheme we can mitigate any negative funding issues by agreeing that the remaining funding allocation is transferred into the Stronger Communities giving element which encourages localised current project delivery by Local Community groups.
- 4.5 Officers are working with the Council's Economic Development and Procurement Teams to enable collaborative working to take place with both external funders and our local VCS organisations / groups to provide the VCS with the skills and knowledge to become sustainable.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 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.

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- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 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.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 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.

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

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

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.

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- 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 22nd 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 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.

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11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The Grants process facilitates engagement with and support for more marginalised people and promotes equality and diversity issues within the local authority.
- 11.2 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.

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.

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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 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	

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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 -

55% allocated to Enterprising Communities -

**Total: 130k for the Delivery of Projects under the ‘Enterprising
Communities’ Banner.**

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Worcestershire Compact: Link to Web-pages:

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/vcs-
unit/worcestershire-compact.aspx](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/vcs-unit/worcestershire-compact.aspx)

24. KEY

BME – Black Minority Ethnic

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

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‘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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