

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

4th October 2011

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS PROGRAMME 2012/12

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Carole Gandy, Community Leadership & Partnerships
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway, Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Executive Committee is requested to recommend changes to the Grants Policy 2011 to ensure the Council's voluntary sector grants programme funds applications from a wide range of organisations.
- 1.2 The Executive Committee is also requested to agree the funding split and themes for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants process for 2012/13.

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 2012/13 voluntary and community sector grants process: see *appendix 3 for details on themes*

Enterprising Communities	-	43.5%	=	£105,000
Safe/ Clean & Green	-	8%	=	£20,000
LSP theme - Health and Wellbeing	-	8%	=	£20,000
LSP theme - Education & Learning	-	27%	=	£65,000
LSP theme – Stronger Communities	-	6.5%	=	£15,000
3 Year Training & Support Project	-	6.5%	=	£15,000; and

- 3) £1,000 (0.5%) be allocated from the Grants budget for the use by the Grants Team to deliver:
 - a) networking and promotional events;
 - b) advertising and communication support;
 - c) newsletters.

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3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The total budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2012/13 is £241,000. The proposed provision of £1,000 to deliver support and events throughout 2011/12 will leave £240,000 available to allocate as grant to outside bodies.
- 3.2 The 'Shopping' element is part of the Councils SIG framework and is delivered under the Councils procurement process. The Grants scheme should support and encourage the local VCS community to grow and become sustainable. To deliver the Shopping element of the funding framework the Council needs to ensure that it does not unduly encroach on the investing and giving elements from a monetary perspective.
- 3.3 The Council can 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. This can be achieved by ensuring that the VCS have access to quality training / workshops for their staff/volunteers.
- 3.4 It is proposed that £15,000 should be allocated from the 2012/13 grant fund to provide - 3 year training and support programme (£5000 per yr). In delivering this via the shopping element the Council can request expressions of interest from organisations that have the capacity to deliver, high quality training to the VCS, thus ensuring value for money and providing a fair and transparent process.
- 3.5 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 any remaining funding allocation is transferred into the Stronger Communities giving element which encourages project delivery by Local Community groups.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 It is proposed that £1,000 should be allocated from the grants budget for the use by the Grants Team to enable delivery of:
 - a) Networking and promotional events;
 - b) Advertising and communication support;
 - c) Newsletters.

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- 3.8 Officers are proposing the level of split between the relevant themes based on the current priorities and needs of the Borough.
- 3.9 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.

Legal Implications

- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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

- 3.12 The Council needs to continue to ensure that it has a transparent and fair grants policy.
- 3.13 To ensure that we continue to support the sector to move forward and deliver projects that provide value for money, Officers have suggested changes to the current policy (see Appendix 1) that will allow Redditch Borough Council's grant programme to ensure it funds a wide range of organisations.
- 3.14 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 procedure is provided and that Officers are engaging with the full range of VCS organisations and groups within the local area.
- 3.15 By implementing a long term training & support programme via the shopping element, we can ensure that the sector will receive an agreed standard of training with the Council ensuring that we receive value for money. Delivering via the Shopping element will allow us to:
- a) Identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities;
 - b) Plan, organise and take action; and,
 - c) Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the project.

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- 3.16 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.
- 3.17 The proposed timescales for the 2012/13 Grant programme are within appendix 2.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.18 The 2011/12 grants programme has supported 21 projects from 13 organisations under the main grant fund with 23 being funded via the Stronger Communities fund.
- 3.19 Following an Overview and Scrutiny Committee review in 2008, a more transparent and inclusive grants scheme was agreed. The 2011/12 Grants Programme received applications from over 50 different organisations, with the programme seeing a 38% increase in funding from the main grant fund to organisations not having applied to this fund previously.
- 3.20 Redditch Borough Council has helped facilitate the building of a robust VCS, by providing 4 workshops aimed at the up-skilling of those working within the sector. These workshops were attended by over 40 different organisations. By implementing a long term training and support programme via the shopping element, we can ensure that the sector will receive an agreed standard of training with the Council ensuring that we receive value for money. Delivering via the Shopping element will allow us to:
- a) Identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities;
 - b) Plan, organise and take action; and,
 - c) Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the project.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

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 Training and Support programme delivered via the shopping element of the grants programme to help build capacity and skills in the Sector. In delivering this programme via the shopping element Redditch Borough Council can ensure that best value is achieved for both the Council and the VCS, thus strengthening the long-term future of this sector.

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5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Policy.
Appendix 2 - Proposed timescales for 2012/13 Grants programme.
Appendix 3 - Funding Themes Table.

6. 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>

7. KEY

SIG - Shopping, Investing and Giving.

BME - Black Minority Ethnic.

LSP - Local Strategic Partnership.

VCS - Voluntary and Community Sector.

'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.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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