

Wiltshire Council

Annual Council

12 May 2015

Notice of Motion No. 18

**Community Area Grants
From Councillors Jeff Osborn and Helen Osborn**

Briefing note in response to motion

Since 2009, the Council has provided over £5m of discretionary funding to the community area boards. This funding is controlled locally by the area board but operates in accordance with the policies and decisions of the Council.

The community grants policy states that applicants for funding can make no more than 2 applications in any financial year. The policy also makes clear that a project that has already received funding cannot receive further funding in the same year. So, although groups may apply twice in any year – the applications must be for different projects.

Local discretion has played an important part in the success of the community area boards. Each area board makes funding decisions based on local knowledge, applying discretion to ensure that the funding is used in a way that reflects the needs and priorities in the local community.

The proposal to limit applications to only one per group per year would restrict the area boards' local discretion. It is not uncommon for an active local group to promote more than one project in a year and at present it is up to the area board to decide whether it wishes to help with funding or not. This discretion would be lost.

The current policy is clear, simple and well understood. The benefits of changing the criteria in the way suggested are uncertain and would impose additional central control. Currently the area boards have sufficient local discretion to decide whether or not they wish to support or decline any particular application.

Laurie Bell

Associate Director, Communities and Communications