

Report to	Trowbridge Area Board
Date of Meeting	7 July 2011
Title of Report	Improving the Grants Auditing process for Trowbridge Area Board

Purpose of Report

To improve the current processes for auditing/evaluating grants that have been allocated or approved by the Trowbridge Area Board including Community Area Grants Scheme (CAGS), Performance Reward Grants Scheme (PRGS) and Area Board Projects.

To consider any actions to take with Performance Reward Grants made to Trowbridge Annual Festival of Fun and Seymour Community Centre.

1. Background

- 1.1. Area Boards have authority to approve Area Grants under powers delegated to them by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Community Services (27 February 2010). Under the Scheme of Delegation Area Boards must adhere to the Area Board Grants Guidance for funding.
- 1.2. There is a uniform process used by all Area Boards when Community Area Grants(CAGS) are awarded. An acceptance letter is sent to the applicant (Appendix 1) which outlines the conditions on the grant being awarded. An evaluation form is also sent out which is to be completed and returned by the applicant on completion of the project awarded funds (Appendix 2)
- 1.3. Whilst the Area Board does not make the decisions on funding for the successful Performance Reward Grant scheme (PRGS), successful applicants are sent the acceptance letter via the Area Board (Appendix 3)
- 1.4. At this stage there is no specific monitoring in process for Area Board Projects.

Background documents used in the preparation of this Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Area Grant Award acceptance letter• Community Areas Grant Evaluation form• Performance Reward Grant letter acceptance letter
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2. Main Considerations

- 2.1. Several issues have arisen with a number of grants allocated by the Trowbridge Area Board including projects not happening and lack of publicity for Wiltshire Council and the Area Board. This report makes some proposals that Trowbridge Area Board may wish to adopt to tighten up the process in particular for those applicants who do not follow the conditions set out in the relevant acceptance letter. It will also give proposals for the monitoring of Area Board Project Grants.

3. Improving the Grants Monitoring process

- 3.1. The Area Board may wish to consider the following options to improve the grant monitoring process:
 - 3.1.1 Releasing funding after the project has been completed and receipts have been received. This would have an impact on the types of groups who could then apply for the CAGS as applicants would need to have enough money to pay for items up front. This may also be a change that needs to be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Community Services as it would change the process considerably to that used by the rest of the Area Boards.
 - 3.1.2 Strengthening the wording in the Trowbridge Area Board's grant acceptance letters especially around the acknowledgment that the Area Board/Wiltshire Council requires on any publicity/printed materials.
 - 3.1.3 Adding a condition that the applicant must invite the relevant Division Councillor (if it is a community wide project the Chairman &/or Vice Chairman) to visit the project.
 - 3.1.4 Holding an annual special Area Board meeting where CAGS projects, PRGS

projects and Area Board Projects that have been funded within the previous year are required to attend to give a verbal update on how the project went.

3.1.5 For Area Board Projects, ensuring that the applicant Councillor completes a grants acceptance letter and completes the CAGS evaluation form on completion of the project.

3.1.6 A biannual report to go to the Area Board so that the Board can see which projects have claimed their funding, which have completed and returned the evaluation form and which are still outstanding.

4. Performance Reward Grant Applications

4.1 Concerns have been raised over two Performance Reward Grants that have claimed their grants: Trowbridge Annual Festival of Fun (TAFF) and Seymour Community Centre. Both groups have been invited to attend the 7 July Trowbridge Area Board meeting to update on their projects.

4.2 No monitoring/evaluation has been returned by TAFF even though the grant was claimed in March 2010. A letter has been written to the group informing them that if they do not comply with completing the evaluation that the grant will need to be repaid. If this does not transpire the Board will need to consider whether they wish to pursue any legal action against the group.

4.3 Seymour Community Centre claimed their grant in December 2010 whilst they have returned an update report the project has claimed that delays in obtaining the lease and planning permission have meant that the project has not yet commenced but it is now 18 months since this bid was approved and no progress has been made. The Area Board needs to consider the point at which a request will be made for the project to return the funding so that it can be used for the benefit of other projects or communities.

5. Financial Implications

5.1. There will always be a slim risk with allocating grants to community groups that projects will fail after the funding has been spent. The grants process allows for the reclaiming of grants monies where projects have been unable to go ahead.

6. Legal Implications

6.1. There are no specific Legal implications related to this report unless the Board wishes to pursue any legal action against groups to try and reclaim any grants.

7. HR Implications

7.1. There are no specific HR implications related to this report.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications

8.1. Community Area Grants give local community and voluntary groups, an equal opportunity to receive funding towards community based projects and schemes.

9. Officer Recommendations

9.1 That the Area Board considers the options in paragraphs 3.1.1 – 3.1.6 to improve the grants monitoring process

9.2 That the Area Board considers what actions to take over the TAFF and Seymour Community Centre bids

Appendices:	Appendix 1 Community Area Grant Award acceptance letter Appendix 2 Community Area Grant Evaluation form Appendix 3 Performance Reward Grant acceptance letter
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Report Author	Rachel Efemey - Community Area Manager Tel. 01225 718608 Email: rachel.efemey@wiltshire.gov.uk
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