

# REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE

Report No. 14

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> February 2007
<b>Title of Report</b>	Community Area Awards Policy 2007/08
<b>Portfolio</b>	Partnerships
Link to Corporate Priorities	Partnership Working
Key Decision	Yes
Executive Workplan Ref	B314
Public Report	Yes

## Summary of Report

The report outlines the amendments to the Community Area Awards Policy recommended by the Joint Community Area Funding Advisory Body (Task Group).

It seeks approval for the revised criteria for the 'Community Area Awards', to be adopted for use by all five Area Committees in 2007/08.

## Officer Recommendations

**To accept the amendments from the Joint Community Area Funding Advisory Body (Task Group), outlined in section 4 of this report and the associated appendices and adopt these as the 2007/08 Community Area Awards Policy.**

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
Yes	None	Yes	None	Yes

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This report outlines improvements to the current funding criteria and application process for Community Area Awards, which will form the policy for 2007/08.
- 1.2. Community Area Awards enable local community groups to apply for Council funding via the Area Committees, to enable them to address community priorities, most especially those identified in the Community Plans.

## **2. Options and Options Appraisal**

### **2.1. Option One - to approve the suggested amendments from the Joint Community Area Funding Advisory Body (Task Group), outlined in section 4 of this report and associated appendices and adopt these as the 2007/08 Community Area Awards Policy.**

- 2.1.1. Approving the amendments to the current Policy will ensure a more effective, efficient, fair and easy process for applicants; thus improving the application process, be it via the Council's website or paper version.
- 2.1.2. The amendments will also provide clarity to Members when making decisions about funding distribution.

### **2.2. Option Two – not to approve the suggested amendments from the Joint Community Area Funding Advisory Body (Task Group), outlined in section 4 of this report and associated appendices and adopt these as the 2007/08 Community Area Awards Policy.**

- 2.2.1. Not to approve the revisions to the Policy will perpetuate minor problems including lack of clarity of the Community Area Awards Policy for both applicants and Members.

## **3. Background Information**

- 3.1. The Council has for a number of years been successful in making Community Area Awards to groups and organisations to enable them to realise projects that benefit the community.
- 3.2. Community Area Awards are made by each of the five Area Committees towards area specific projects, the majority of which are linked to the delivery of the Community Plans
- 3.3. Since 2004/5 an annual Member Task Group, made up from representatives from each Area Committee has met to review the funding criteria and application pack. The process also takes into account the Council's commitment to the Compact and its responsibilities in respect to the Funding and Procurement Code of Practice.
- 3.4. A Task Group was invited to make suggestions for improvements to the Community Area Award funding criteria to be incorporated for 2007/08. The following members made up the Task Group:

Area 1 – Cllrs A Davis & I Henderson  
Area 2 – Cllrs G Greenaway & H Dixon  
Area 3 – Cllrs D Allen & J Rooke  
Area 4 – Cllrs G Offord & C Reid  
Area 5 – Cllrs D Evans & C O'Gorman

Portfolio Member for Partnerships Cllr R Henning

- 3.5. In addition to re-visiting the criteria, there was an opportunity to look at the whole funding experience. All proposals were based upon improving the process to ensure it would be an effective, efficient, fair and easy process for applicants, officers and Members.

**4. Outcomes**

- 4.1. The Joint Community Area Funding Advisory Body (Task Group) met on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The following Members made up the Task Group:

Area 1 – Cllr I Henderson  
Area 2 – Cllrs G Greenaway & H Dixon  
Area 3 – Cllrs D Allen & J Rooke,  
Area 5 – Cllrs D Evans & C O’Gorman  
Portfolio Member for Partnerships Cllr R Henning

- 4.2. Following considerable improvements to the criteria and application process last year, Members suggested the following amendments for 2007/08:
- 4.2.1. That the, 'Guide to Funding' make clear that funding would be awarded according to demand over the three funding rounds rather than the budget being divided equally between the three tranches.
- 4.2.2. A number of minor alterations were made to the 'Funding Criteria' section, including cross-referencing information to the 'Local Funding & Advice' section.
- 4.2.3. The 'Local Funding & Advice' sheet would, in addition to details about external sources of funding, also include information about the Council's Executive Capital Partnership Funding Scheme.
- 4.2.4. In future planning permission would only need to be investigated by the applicant when submitting their application, although the receipt of planning permission would form a condition of an Award being made.
- 4.2.5. Minor changes were made to the application form to make it more user-friendly while maintaining the necessary rigour and responsibilities required when distributing public money.
- 4.3. No award would be made to an applicant that exceeded the sum requested on the formal application form. Should Members wish to award a greater sum, the item would need to be deferred until the next funding round and the applicant requested to submit a revised application.
- 4.4. Capital and revenue will continue not to be awarded for the same scheme. The rationale for this approach is to ensure that applicants ensure that before committing themselves to capital schemes that they have the means by which they can sustain their project and have funding for running costs.
- 4.5. The provision of plaques for larger projects that acknowledged the Council's involvement was considered. These would have a cost that would have to be found from the Area Committee's budget. Details are currently being investigated.
- 4.6. A capital award of less than £1,000 may only be made where it can be shown to generate external funding.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1. At the Executive meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007 Members were asked to approve a community area capital budget for 2007/08 of £200,000 (£40,000 per Area), with a further £100,000 for each of the following two years (£20,000 per area) in addition to an area revenue budget of £ 8,000.
- 5.2. Members' attention is drawn to the Capital Strategy (approved by Executive on 14 December 2006), that stated that a de minimus level for Capital expenditure is set at £1,000 or a lower sum if it generates external funding.

## **6. Community and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1. This scheme is an excellent example of the Council helping to support community projects and activities. Awards made by both Area Committees and through delegated authority enable applicants to contribute to the continuance and/or the improvement of cultural, social and community activity and well being throughout North Wiltshire, the extent and specifics of which are dependent on the individual project.

## **7. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 7.1. Community Area Awards give local community and voluntary groups, Town and Parish Councils an opportunity to receive funding towards community based projects and schemes.
- 7.2. An Equality Impact Assessment for the Community Area Awards has been undertaken and copies are available on the Council's website.

## **8. Risk Analysis**

- 8.1. Failure to agree a comprehensive and clear funding process would cause a moderate negative impact on both applicants and Members.

<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>Appendix 1 Community Area Award Guidance 2007.8</b> <b>Appendix 2 Sample Community Area Award Application Form 2007.8</b> <b>Appendix 3 Other Local Advice &amp; Funding</b> <b>Appendix 4 Making an Application Flow Chart</b>
<b>Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Community Area Award Application Pack 2006.7</b></li></ul>