

**West Wiltshire District Council
Cabinet**

28th July 2004

Review of Grants Administered by Community Development

1. Purpose

To agree criteria for allocation of grants. The current criteria are in the information pack available in the members room. Budgetary issues will be considered as part of the Council's budgetary process for 05/06

2. Background

A Grants Review Group of officers and members have met to undertake a review of why we give grants and how we could improve the current procedure. All papers can be found in the Community Development Grants Review file in the members room.

Community Development Grants			
The current grants administered by the Community Development Section can be summarised as follows:			
Type	Purpose	Budget	Criteria
District-wide Grants	Grants are awarded annually to organisations who are providing a service throughout the district.	Revenue £109,020	Set of fundamental and optional criteria detailed in supporting papers in members room.
Play Area	Supports the development and improvement of play areas through the District.	Capital £21,000	Criteria and scoring system details in supporting papers in members room. Assessment of the applications made jointly between Community Development and Landscape Officer.
Small Grants(Area Committee & Community Planning)	Grants of up to £500 for local community groups and projects. Includes Excellence in Arts & Sports Awards, set at £100, as well as small grants available to help with the development of community plans at neighbourhood/parish and community area level.	Revenue £13,000	Set of fundamental and optional criteria for Area Committee and Excellence Awards detailed in supporting papers in members room.
Partnership Grants –		Revenue	

a) Viridor Landfill Tax	Partnership with other local authorities & Viridor to support community amenities and facilities	£4,000	Guidelines developed by Community First & agreed by the partnership. Panel of officers and members makes final decision on grants.
b) Village Hall Grant Scheme	Partnership with other local authorities, with funding matched by County Council	Revenue £9,500	Guidelines developed by Community First and agreed by the partnership. Panel of members and officers make final decision.
c) Community Legal Services Partnership (CLSP)	Partnership with other funders.	Revenue £3,500	BVPI around CLSP

3. Key issues

Resources

The Community Development Section's grants budget is diminishing whilst demand for it is increasing. Each year where we have continued to fund an organisation, because we do not include any kind of inflationary element, our contribution is effectively worth less than the previous year. Current Budget is £160,020

Central Government Guidance

Central government, in the Treasury's Cross-Cutting Review of The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector, 2002 has made it clear that they expect Local Authorities to support the voluntary sector, particularly infrastructure organisations (local voluntary agencies that support the development of voluntary and community groups), and that this support should allow for full cost recovery, including the costs involved in having an organisation in existence, and not just buying in specific services. Community Development contributions through grant aid, in most cases, are towards organisations core services which includes this element.

The Compact

The development of the Compact between the Voluntary and Statutory sector is well underway and it is vital that our grants scheme aligns with the principles and codes of practise of it. This Council has already signed up to the Compact.

New Structures

The way in which the Council engages with parishes and the local community has recently changed. Area Committees and their Community Meetings no longer exist. An increase in importance has been given to the role that members and the Community Area Partnerships have

Criteria

In the past, our criteria, including corporate objectives, have been very broad and enabled all applicants to meet the criteria.

Links to Other Services

Some of the organisations funded through the Community Development Grants have links to other district council service areas. Currently there is no involvement of other services in determining which organisations are funded.

Consultation:

Current recipients of grant were invited to return a short questionnaire around the current system and the money they receive. The Grants Review Group considered these responses when developing their proposal. A summary is available in the information pack. The voluntary sector are represented on the Compact where most of their issues will be addressed.

4. Proposal

The Review Group considered a number of issues and recommend the following proposal.

District-wide Grants – Budget £109,020

A more strategic approach could be taken to get maximum benefit for our limited resources. A two part scheme, funding fewer organisations better, is proposed –

3 Year Service Agreement	Annual Grant Scheme
Above a certain level, eg £5000	Minimum of £500
Commitment to 3 year funding	Involve Voluntary Action West Wiltshire in administration
Joint with other funders where appropriate to ease management and monitoring	
WWDC will aspire to link funding to inflation in order to at least maintain the same level of support.	
Align with Compact	
Mainly infrastructure organisations	
The views of relevant Service Managers and Portfolio Holders will be included in the cabinet report on Service Agreements grants.	
12 months notice of changes in Service Agreement or intention to not continue	

▪ Revised criteria:

- (a)there is no other more appropriate source of funding within the district council and
- (b)the organisation is actively working in partnership and
- (c)the organisation is providing a service throughout the district and
- (d)the work of the organisation aligns significantly with a corporate priority and/or
- (e)the work of the organisation significantly contributes to council targets

Advantages:

- 3 year funding would give those voluntary groups and organisations, which we fund, a sounder financial footing with a degree of security and allow them to develop longer-term plans. This is an important part of the Compact which the District Council has signed up to.

- Improving links with the voluntary sector and involving Service Managers and Portfolio Holders would help develop joined up working and more effectively meet our strategic objectives.
- It would strengthen links between VAWW and other groups. This will be particularly important in helping groups that are unsuccessful as they will need assistance to find other funds. VAWW are in agreement with the principles of this but detail of how this will work needs to be worked up at a future date.

Disadvantages:

In any grant process some groups inevitably miss out. In strengthening links with selected organisations, fewer organisations will be able to be funded but improved links with infrastructure organisations, such as Voluntary Action West Wiltshire and Charities Information Bureau, should help them find funds elsewhere.

Small Grants - Budget £13,000

(Merged Area Committee Grants and Community Planning Grants)

It is proposed that this is divided up 3 ways approximately on the following basis:

- 40% to support the work of the Community Development Team in line with the Service Plan, Community Strategy and Corporate Plan
- 10% earmarked for acknowledging excellence in art and sport, whilst acknowledging the need to review how this will run.
- 50% to be delegated through the Area Partnerships as a project fund, with support, guidance and conditions attached. This will help foster better links between Community Area Partnerships and local community groups.

Partnership Funding & Play Area Grants – Budget £17,000 & £21,000

Our partnership grant funds and play area grants help address some of the main issues arising from community planning, around facilities for young people and local amenities in rural areas. We propose retaining these because of this and the fact that they attract other money into the district.

Financial implications:

No changes in budget are intrinsic in the following proposal but service bids are likely to be made at the appropriate time.

Legal issues:

- Service Agreements will need to be written
- Delegation of grants needs to be agreed by cabinet

Sustainability implications:

Increasing the support to infrastructure organisations and providing commitment through 3 year service agreements will increase the sustainability of those individual organisations and the voluntary and community sector in general.

Summary of new scheme:

- Service Agreements - over £5,000
- Major Grants – minimum £500
- Area Partnership grants – up to £500
- Revised Excellence/Achievement in Arts & Sport
- Community Development budget to support Service Plan, Community Strategy and Corporate Plan
- Partnership Funding and Play Area funding remains the same.

5. Key decisions

Statement of reason for key decision	Significant impact on community and involves a budget of £160,020
Options considered and rejected	Retaining the status quo and a variety of other criteria.
Date of implementation (not less than five days after date of decision)	April 2005

6. List of background papers

Grants Review File, Community Development.

7. Recommendation (s)

The criteria for the future allocation of grants administered by Community Development as set out in 4 above are accepted.

Plain English Guidance Given

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17th June 2004

List of Appendices

Papers from the Grants Review Group are available in the members room. These include –

Notes and papers of the meetings

Summary of Compact

First drafts of codes of practise

Summary of consultation exercise