

Minutes

Adjourned meeting of the
Western Area Committee
29th January 2004
held on Tuesday 3rd February 2004
at The Council House,
Bourne Hill

**THESE MINUTES SHOULD BE KEPT FOR USE BY DISTRICT COUNCILLORS
AT THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

P R E S E N T

District Councillors

Councillor Mrs S A Willan - Chairman
Councillor Mrs J Green – Vice-Chairman

Councillors J A Cole-Morgan, T F Couper, E R Draper, P D Edge,
J B Hooper, G E Jeans and Mrs C A Spencer

Apologies: A J A Brown-Hovelt and P D Edge

MINUTES NOT REQUIRING COUNCIL APPROVAL

**201. CONSULTATION WITH AREA COMMITTEES RE: REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S
SOUTH WILTSHIRE AREA GRANTS (SWAG)**

Following a presentation from Councillor Cole-Morgan in his capacity as the Community and Housing Portfolio Holder, the Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Principal Community Development Officer. Amber Skyring was also in attendance to answer questions.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the main objective of this review is to make the best use of limited resources and during his presentation he outlined the key issues as follows:-

(1) Funding Advisor

- When the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) took on a funding advisor there was evidence of a huge increase of funding into the local area
- Salisbury District Council needs to consider ways of preventing the creation of a dependency culture whereby outside organisations look to the Council as their first (and sometimes only) resort for funding.
- At present, the Council does not give detailed advice to applicants for funding and this could be improved through the use of a funding advisor.

- A funding advisor will make people and groups much more aware of other sources of funding streams as well as to give added value by helping groups to build their capacity and by signposting them to other agencies and organisations.
- The post will be of direct assistance to small organisations in local areas.
- Funding advice offered will be on a one to one basis with each group. Expertise will develop on how to apply for funds from outside sources which can be shared within the community.

(2) Centralised SWAG Review Panel

- The representatives for each area on the central panel would be the sponsors or advocates of the applications in the area which they represent.
- SWAG funding would still (as at present) be split on a per capita basis.
- Any recommendations made by the centralised review panel would still, as at present, come to the relevant area committee for a final decision.
- Currently, there is a disparity between the different area committees as to what criteria they use for determining applications. A central panel would remove this inconsistency between areas and ensure that decisions are all in line with the councils core priorities. This inconsistency is in breach of the “compact” the Cabinet signed in July of 2003 with the County Council and other Wiltshire District Councils.
- The present system is wasteful in terms of both officer and Member time.
- It is very difficult for officers who attend the SWAG Review Panel’s to block off time to attend all those taking place.

(3) Central Cultural Pot

- This would be appropriate for applications which have a district wide implication (such as the Rio + 10 event and the Cuckoo Fair).
- No central pot is currently available.
- Would like to see about 10% of SWAG budget from each area put into the central pot.
- The proposal means that, should the central pot not have spent all its funds by the time consideration is to be given to SWAG Tranche 3, the funds remaining would be diverted to the SWAG Review Panel to spend (based upon a per capita distribution between the areas).

(4) Grant Award Ceiling

- Willing to be flexible on this issue
- The belief is that the more grants that can be made [of a lower amount] allows a greater yield of goodwill which will benefit a greater number of people in the communities.

Following the presentation, Members of the Committee made the following comments:-

- Parishes do not use SWAG as the first and only source of funding - many do look elsewhere for funding.
- SWAG often provides a lever to acquire match funding which enables projects to take place.

- The Committee is not convinced that the appointment of a Funding Advisor will meet all the needs of grant applicants.
- It will be difficult to measure the benefits of employing a funding advisor.
- The position of a funding advisor should not be funded from SWAG.
- Councillors are elected to act on behalf of the local area that they represent and this includes spending funds they have access to in order to benefit their local area. The allocation of funding at a local level is in the democratic gift of Area Committees.

RESOLVED –

- (1) (a) That the Western Area Committee does not support the appointment of a specialist fundraising Advisor unless this post is funded from the Council's Reserves.
- (b) That if this post is funded according to (1)(a) above this should be reviewed after two years and processes should be in place by which time the success of this post can be measured (e.g. by obtaining feedback from applicants who received advice from the funding advisor).
- (2) (a) That the Western Area Committee support the creation of a Central SWAG Review Panel.
- (b) That the Central SWAG Review Panel should comprise three elected member representatives from each of the four area committees and each set of three members alone will formally vote on those applications that fall within their Area Committee .
- (3) That the Western Area Committee support the creation of a Cultural Grant for South Wiltshire to support district wide applications and utilising SWAG money to fund it as proposed, provided that,
 - (a) This fund is not solely limited to organisations located in Salisbury City Centre.
 - (b) Applicants applying for funds from this Central Pot clearly demonstrate that the application has district wide benefits.
 - (c) All twelve members of the Review Panel vote on district wide applications and determine each one on its own merits.
- (4) That the Western Area Committee supports SWAG funds being reduced from the current ceiling limit of £5,000 to a max of £2,500 for capital items and £1,000 for projects and events, but with the proviso that these sums can be exceeded in exceptional circumstances.

The meeting concluded at 4.40pm.