



Cabinet 25 June 2008

Recommendations from Grant Panel: 10 June 2008 (Jun08/18)

(The Chairman of the Grant Panel agreed that the items would be taken out of order to that published on the agenda.)

Report	Title	Recommendations
Agenda Item 9	Financial Arrangements for Grants	In anticipation that the allocation for 2008/2009, including the amounts brought forward from previous financial years, be fully utilised, consideration be given that as part of the budget setting process, that provision be made in the 2009/2010 budget for the allocation of funding to the Rural Village Halls, Play Schemes and Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme and the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund.
Z41	Applications for Project Funding: 2008/2009	That, the following grants be awarded in 2008/2009:- (a) Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund <i>(Although considered in respect of the Rural Village Halls, Play Schemes and Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme, the Panel has recommended that the funding for the following application is allocated from the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund.)</i> (1) up to a maximum of £3,000 be awarded to Coney Weston Parish Council towards the modernisation and equipping of a new village play area, subject to match funding being confirmed. (b) Rural Village Halls, Play Schemes and Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme (1) £10,000 be awarded to Great Barton Pathway towards the cost of exterior fixtures, fittings and the landscaping of the new nursery school in Great Barton, subject to the remainder of match funding being raised; (2) delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director for Community to approve the Cavendish Pre-school's application for a grant of £7,035 towards upgrading the Jubilee Room of Cavendish Memorial Hall, subject to:-

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) further research and consultation being undertaken with the Cavendish Pre-School and the Cavendish Memorial Hall's Management Committee regarding outstanding issues identified at the meeting of the Grant Panel on 10 June 2008; and (ii) consultation with full Members (and substitutes, if appropriate) of the Grant Panel using the 'fast-track' e-mail system that usually is applied to the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund Scheme, as detailed in Appendix A to the Grants Policy; and <p>(3) £7,500 be awarded to Rougham Acorns and Woodlands Limited towards the completion of their pre-school building.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8</p>	<p>Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief: Implications for the Grant Panel</p>	<p>Following a detailed discussion, as outlined in italics below, the Panel <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the changes to the Council's policy on granting top up discretionary rate relief, be re-considered by the Policy Development Committee, in respect of the implications for the Grant Panel, with particular reference to the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) due to the significant number of applications received for top up discretionary rate relief, that an alternative method for the consideration of applications other than by the Grant Panel be considered; (2) the draft Top Up Discretionary Rate Relief Scoring Matrix (Appendix D to Report Y282) be amended and simplified to enable applications to be considered more efficiently and to ensure fairness and transparency; and (3) consideration be given to replacing the sliding scale of granting up to 20% with the standard 20% discretionary top up relief. <p><i>(On 7 November 2007, the Cabinet approved changes to the Council's policy on granting discretionary rate relief for charitable and non-profit making organisations (Report Y321 refers) following consideration of a range of options for amendments to the existing policy by the Policy Development Committee.</i></p> <p><i>On 10 June 2008, the Grant Panel received a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer who outlined the implications for the</i></p>

		<p><i>Grant Panel including that all future applications for top up discretionary rate relief (DRR) be considered by the Grant Panel. A total of 88 applications for top up DRR were received in 2007/2008, therefore this could potentially be an onerous task for the Panel, particularly as the level of funding provided for top up discretionary rate relief would now be reviewed on an annual basis and, therefore, similar numbers of applications would require consideration by the Panel each year.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the Council's previous policy of granting the standard 20% DRR had been reviewed which would now require the Panel to consider granting relief on a sliding scale of between 0-20%, in increments of 5%, depending on the merits of each application. Concern was therefore expressed, that this could potentially create the possibility of applicants that offered similar services but were awarded different levels of top up DRR, could consider that unfair decisions had been made.</i></p> <p><i>The Panel also recognised that the draft Top Up Discretionary Rate Relief Scoring Matrix (Appendix D to Report Y282) required amendment as it was considered too complicated in its current format. Applications could be dealt with more efficiently if the matrix was simplified which would also help to ensure fairness and transparency.)</i></p>
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