

# Grant Working Party



St Edmundsbury  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Friday 13 March 2015</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>10.00 am</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>West Suffolk House</b> Western Way Bury St Edmunds
<b>Full Members:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chairman</b> Angela Rushen</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vice Chairman</b> Jim Thorndyke</p> <p><u>Conservative Members</u> (6) Sarah Broughton Phillip French Robert Clifton-Brown Ian Houlder</p> <p><u>Independent Group Member</u> (1) Derek Redhead</p>
<b>Substitutes:</b>	<p><u>Conservative Members</u> (2) Christopher Spicer Sara Mildmay-White</p> <p><u>Independent Group Member</u> (1) David Nettleton</p>
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
<b>Quorum:</b>	Three Members
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	<b>Claire Skoyles</b> SEBC Cabinet Officer/Committee Administrator <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757176 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:claire.skoyles@westsuffolk.gov.uk">claire.skoyles@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>

# Agenda

Page No

## Procedural Matters

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Substitutes**
3. **Minutes**

**1 - 8**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2015 (copy attached).

## Part 1 - Public

4. **New Approach to Grant Funding Arrangements and Review of the Locality Budget Scheme**

**9 - 34**

Report No: **GWP/SE/15/002**

5. **Dates of Future Meetings**

No dates for an ordinary meeting in the 2015/2016 civic year have been proposed at this stage. The Borough Council's Elections are scheduled for May 2015 and therefore membership of the Working Party may change by the time it meets again in late 2015.

The next meeting will therefore be arranged nearer the time in consultation with the Working Party.

## Part 2 – Exempt

**NONE**

# Grant Working Party



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Grant Working Party** held on  
**Monday 12 January 2015** at **5.00 pm** in **GFR14, West Suffolk House,**  
Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

**Chairman** Angela Rushen  
**Vice Chairman** Jim Thorndyke

Sarah Broughton                      Ian Houlder  
Robert Clifton-Brown

**By Invitation:**  
Sara Mildmay-White                      Christopher Spicer  
(Portfolio Holder for  
Health and  
Communities)

1. **Substitutes**

No substitutions were declared.

2. **Election of Chairman**

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs A Rushen be elected Chairman for the Grant Working Party.

3. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

It was proposed, seconded and,

RESOLVED:

That Councillor J Thorndyke be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Grant Working Party.

4. **Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Redhead.

5. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. **Update on: Core Grants; the Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme; Member Locality Budgets; and Streamlining the Grant Funding Process**

The Working Party received and noted Report No: GWP/SE/15/001 (previously circulated), which provided an updated on Core Grants; the Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme; Member Locality Budgets; and Streamlining the Grant Funding Process.

The Working Party noted that the core grants outlined in Section 1.3 of the report had already been approved for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 as funding agreements were in place. Members noted however, that an application had been received from Suffolk Young People's Health Project for funding in 2015/2016 and some areas needed to be clarified at the time of the publication of the report. The following update was provided at the meeting:

The applicant was an organisation based in Ipswich, which dealt with mental health issues which included a counselling service for young people. Some clarification on matters was still required, including whether there was an identified need for this service; how they worked with young people; and whether external match funding could be sought.

A discussion was also held on the £10,000 grant awarded to Suffolk Community Foundation Sports Fund in 2015/2016 and how the total funding received from Suffolk County Council and the other Suffolk districts would be allocated throughout Suffolk in the long term. Members also noted how this endowment fund would integrate with the work of Suffolk Sport and Abbeycroft Leisure.

The Working Party then noted updates on the current status of the Substance Misuse Core Grants for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016; Grants awarded that amounted to £250 or less; and the Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme (RIGS).

***Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme***

Members were informed that since the publication of the report, Pakenham Parish Council had received an allocation of £500 from the RIGS fund. This meant the balance for this 'pot' had reduced to just under £63,000. In addition, Members noted that Stanningfield Village Hall had received £4,000 of RIGS funding and not Bradfield Combust Village Hall, as stated in Section 4.1 of the report.

Discussion was also held on the current status of the Rural Coffee Caravan application which had applied for monies previously allocated via the former Rural Action Plan; the role of Community Action Suffolk (former Suffolk

ACRE); publicising of grants made under the RIGS scheme; and why the allocation of £6,303 RIGS funding to Honington and Sapiston Village Hall had been reduced from its initial application of £10,000. The officers would follow this up and respond with an answer to the Grant Working Party by email.

The Chairman then reminded Members that they needed to respond promptly to emails on RIGS applications so that the grant could be swiftly awarded (or not as the case may be).

Information was then provided on the 2014/2015 piloted Member Locality Budget Scheme; and proposals to streamline the grant funding process. Whilst these matters were both considered under this item, further detail on these issues are provided under the separate agenda headings (see minutes 7 and 8 accordingly)

## **7. Streamlining the Grant Funding Process - Community Chest (working title)**

The Working Party was invited to partake in a workshop-style discussion to consider proposals put forward by officers for potential development to enable the streamlining the grant funding process. This included the consideration of principles for a Community Chest (working title).

A series of questions were asked, which sought the Working Party's views on proposals for streamlining the grant funding process.

### ***What is the Council's role in grant funding?***

- (a) The Rural Initiative Grant Scheme was established to support rural areas as parishes provided services through their own precepts that were already provided by the Borough Council in the towns (namely parks, cemeteries, play areas etc). Members considered this scheme should remain separate to the proposed Community Chest (working title) and the Locality Budget Scheme (LBS). The remaining approximate value of £63,000 in the RIGS 'pot' should remain ringfenced for rural areas but not incorporated into the LBS as some RIGS allocations exceeded that currently allowed under the LBS. Members would need to consider what would happen to any remaining monies in this 'pot' when the Scheme ceased to operate in two years' time.
- (b) With the exception of RIGS, the principle of a single fund (Community Chest) to amalgamate the existing grant pots as outlined in Report No: GWP/SE/15/001 was supported.

### ***What lessons can we learn from the current process?***

- (a) The criteria for core grant funding needed attention to make it more comprehensible, open and transparent, to enable those involved in the decision making process (i.e the Grant Working Party, Cabinet and ultimately full Council as part of the budget setting process) to make more informed decisions on the recommended grant and the validity of any reductions proposed.

- (b) Greater analysis of the organisations that received funding was required, which was largely historic.

***What worked well with core grant process?***

That some flexibility remained in the process, for example, the Grant Working Party recommended a grant of £1,500 to SARS in 2014/2015 (subsequently approved by Cabinet), which was contrary to the officers' recommendation.

***What should grant criteria include?***

Criteria would potentially need to include:

- (a) justified reasons for the required funding;
- (b) a demonstration of more joined up partnership working between organisations as there appeared to be a significant amount of duplication;
- (c) greater emphasis being placed on match funding being obtained from other external organisations and less reliance on local authority funding;
- (d) provision for applications to be judged on their own merits;
- (e) feedback required from the organisations receiving funding, e.g. where the money was spent and the outcomes;
- (f) the organisations needed to help people in West Suffolk/St Edmundsbury and meet the Families and Communities (F&C) Principles;
- (g) F&C Officers to provide support to the organisations on where they could obtain funding from non-local authority bodies;
- (h) Funding Agreements be established and sufficient notice be given to the organisation if future funding was reduced/discontinued; and
- (i) funding should not be allocated to remain unspent in the organisation's reserves.

***How should the allocation of funds be governed and monitored?***

On being asked whether a Grant Working Party was required, Members agreed that it was however, it was agreed that meetings need only be bi-annual or annual as several items of business could be dealt with via email, such as RIGS applications.

It was suggested that one meeting could be used for considering potential policy changes and operational matters, while the other be convened to consider the core funding application round and Community Chest applications.

### ***Any other comments or concerns?***

Discussion was held on a maximum term for a Funding Agreement. Two year agreements were agreed but work a year ahead (or more for material core grants) to provide the organisation with security regarding its future; however, agreements should be flexible depending on the need.

Other issues/conclusions were expressed at this point on what the organisation receiving funding needed to consider, which included:

- (a) being able to demonstrate their strengths and what they did for the community;
- (b) who were they aiming to reach, was there an identified need, and what were the outcomes and impact of their service;
- (c) being able to demonstrate how their funding was matched; and
- (d) was there a wider impact on the Borough Council's services if funding was reduced.

### **8. Member Locality Budget Review**

The Working Party received and noted an update on the review of the Member Locality Budget Scheme.

The above grant scheme was piloted in St Edmundsbury in 2014/2015 as a result of it being successfully introduced in Forest Heath. Section 5 of Report No: GWP/SE/15/001 considered earlier on the agenda provided a summary of the success of the scheme.

The Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for grants stated that she would email a reminder to all Members explaining that their remaining funds in their locality budgets could be awarded up until the beginning of the purdah period in March 2015.

Feedback from the Working Party on the success of the pilot included:

- (a) it would be helpful if Members knew when the cheque to the organisation had been sent out;
- (b) some Members had difficulties allocating funding to potential recipients;
- (c) as it was the first year, it was acknowledged that it would take some time to get the scheme 'off the ground', however it was disappointing if no funding had been allocated; and
- (d) it was recognised that Ward Members were the main drivers of this scheme, however, Families and Communities Officers played a significant role in supporting Members on ways in which the monies could be spent,

In response to questions, the Working Party was informed that a checklist would be introduced to provide consistency on how monies awarded from the Locality Budget Scheme were handled; and all councillors would be contacted to obtain their views on the success of the scheme as part of the overall review of the pilot.

## 9. **Arts and Sports Revenue Grants**

The Working Party received and noted a verbal update on the current status of the Arts and Sports Revenue Support Grants currently allocated by the Borough Council. The organisations that received such funding were Victory Sports Ground, Smith's Row Art Gallery, and the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds.

Members were informed that as part of the recent budget consultation, focus groups had been asked their views on the Theatre Royal and Smith's Row and the outcome of this helped to inform proposed future funding for these two organisations.

### ***Smith's Row Art Gallery***

A meeting had been held with Suffolk County Council (SCC), as another principal grant funder of this organisation to discuss future funding. Consequently and having taken into account a number of factors, it was proposed that Smith's Row should receive a 25% reduction in its current Borough Council funding of £34,485 in 2015/2016 with a view to withdrawing funding completely from 2016. The remaining funds in this grant pot would be allocated to other visual art projects in Borough.

The Working Party agreed with this proposal and supported the Portfolio Holder's view that whilst the Borough Council received rent for the premises in which the Gallery was located, the organisation had not demonstrated to the Council commercial behaviours or adapted to a changing landscape of community need in this field.

In response to a question, Members were informed that the length of time in which the Gallery had received a grant from the Borough Council would be provided to the Working Party in due course as this information was not to hand at the meeting.

### ***Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds***

The Theatre Royal had been informed that it was to receive a cut in Arts Council England funding with effect from April 2015. The Theatre had responded positively to this with better, more commercial programming that attracted larger audiences, and efforts made to reach out into the community.

Work was being undertaken to ascertain whether the Theatre and The Apex could benefit from greater partnership working. In the meantime, it was proposed that the Theatre's grant should be reduced by £5,000 to £66,250 in 2015/2016 with the aim of working more closely with them in future years to look at reducing this grant further.



### **Victory Sports Ground, Bury St Edmunds**

It was proposed that as the opening of the community sports facility at the Victory Sports Ground was a relatively new venture, further support was required to help them behave more commercially to make the facility more independently financially viable. Abbeycroft Leisure would provide this support to help them be more proactive and robust with their methods for attracting additional community use. It was therefore proposed that in 2015/2016, the Victory Sports Ground would receive a reduction in grant of £2,500 to £45,250 with a view of introducing a further, more pronounced reduction from 2016/2017 onwards.

RESOLVED:

That, the following proposed Arts and Sports Revenue Support Grants be endorsed, prior to their consideration by Cabinet and being subject to the budget setting process for 2015/2016:

- (1) a 25% reduction in its current Borough Council funding of £34,485 in 2015/2016 with a view to withdrawing funding completely from 2016 be granted to Smith's Row Art Gallery;
- (2) a reduction of £5,000 be granted to the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds to £66,250 in 2015/2016 with the aim of working more closely with them in future years to look at reducing this grant further; and
- (3) a reduction of £2,500 be granted to the Victory Sports Ground, Bury St Edmunds to £45,250 in 2015/2016 with a view of introducing a further, more pronounced reduction from 2016/2017 onwards.

#### **10. Dates of Future Meetings**

The Working Party determined that it would not need to meet before budget setting on 24 February 2015; however, it would like to meet before the Grants Review and Member Locality Budget Review paper was considered by Cabinet on 24 March 2015.

A meeting would be convened in early to mid March 2015. Potential dates would be sought and agreement obtained from the Chairman. Members would be informed of the new date by email.

The meeting concluded at 6.53 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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# Grant Working Party



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>New approach to grant funding arrangements and review of the Locality Budget Scheme</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>GWP/SE/15/002</b>	
<b>Report to and date/s:</b>	<b>Grant Working Party</b>	13 March 2015
	<b>Cabinet</b>	24 March 2015
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Sara Mildmay-White Portfolio Holder for Health and Communities <b>Tel:</b> 01359 270580 <b>Email:</b> sara.mildmay-white@stedsbc.gov.uk	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Davina Howes Head of Families and Communities <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757070 <b>Email:</b> davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To detail changes to the grant funding arrangements for 2015/2016 onwards including the establishment of a Community Chest fund. The report also provides a summary of the implementation of the Locality Budget Scheme in 2014/2015 and suggests amendments to the Scheme for 2015/2016.	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the Cabinet:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(1) approves the revised approach to grant funding from 2015/2016 including the establishment of a Community Chest;</b></li> <li><b>(2) agrees that the Portfolio Holder be given delegated powers to make awards from the Community Chest funding to the value of £10,000;</b></li> <li><b>(3) revokes the existing St Edmundsbury Grant Policy and from April 2015 and replaces with the new criteria as outlined in Appendix A;</b></li> </ol>	

	<p><b>(4) notes the success of the Locality Budget Scheme to date and approve revisions to the scheme to be implemented for 2015/2016; and</b></p> <p><b>(5) approves that any Locality Budget underspend for 2014/2015 with the exception of the £500 per Councillor carry-forward, be retained within the Locality Budget fund for allocation in future years.</b></p>
<p><b>Key Decision:</b></p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i></p>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Pending any further guidance from the Secretary of State, a decision which results in expenditure or savings of more than £50,000 will normally be considered as a key decision.</p>
<p><i>The key decision made as a result of this report will be published within <b>48 hours</b> and cannot be actioned until <b>seven working days</b> have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i></p>	
<p><b>Consultation:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Councillors were contacted by staff to discuss views on the implementation of the Locality Budget Scheme in 2014/2015 and to identify potential improvements.</li> <li>• The Grant Working Party considered issues relating to grants implementation and administration at its last meeting in January 2015 and again at this meeting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alternative option(s):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council could retain its existing approach to grants which allocates funding accordingly to specific criteria. However, it does not meet with the requirements of the council's Families and Communities Strategy and does not provide flexibility nor enable a responsive approach to community need.</li> <li>• The council could choose not to provide any grant or locality funding however it is recognised that some support to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector is required. The Community Chest also enables the council to commission services to support the delivery of its priorities.</li> </ul>

<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for grants and the locality budget scheme are contained within existing budgets. This report proposes that any underspends in the Locality Budget Scheme be retained within the budget for allocation in future years. See section three for further information.</li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires that the existing Grant Policy be revoked.</li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council's approach to grants has been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment and no negative consequences have been identified.</li> </ul>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk (before controls)</b>	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk (after controls)</b>
Organisations are not aware of our approach to grants	Medium	Implement a wide ranging communications plan	Low
Requests for funding exceed the amount of money available	Medium	Eligibility criteria and an evaluation scoring matrix to be used to identify best fit and value for money	Low
Organisations do not have the capacity to respond to the council's approach to commissioning	Medium	Support provided to organisations and a phased approach to be taken to enable organisations to become familiar with the new approach	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All Ward/s	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		St Edmundsbury Grant Policy: <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community/Rural_Communities/upload/GrantsPolicyApril2014.pdf">http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community/Rural_Communities/upload/GrantsPolicyApril2014.pdf</a>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		<b>Appendix A:</b> Grant funding criteria <b>Appendix B:</b> Locality Budget Scheme revised councillor guidance <b>Appendix C:</b> Locality Budget Scheme revised application form	

## 1. New approach to grant funding arrangements

### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 A key part of delivering West Suffolk's second Strategic Plan priority (for 2014-2016) of "resilient families and communities that are healthy and active" is to support a "thriving voluntary sector and active communities who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable". This support takes many forms across the various areas of the council's business. An important element is the financial support that the council gives to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) in the form of grants.

1.1.2 The current arrangements for grant funding of VCSE organisations are complex and five types of grant are currently available, as follows:

Funding type	Purpose
<b>Core funding</b>	Available to help pay running costs for up to three years for groups that provide a voluntary service in the local area. Includes agreed outcomes. Higher value grants may involve Service Level Agreements.
<b>Grants of £250 or less</b>	Available to residents associations who have had less than five years of annual funding.
<b>Locality Budgets</b>	Granted by Ward Councillors to community groups for projects or activities that the whole community can enjoy, minimum award per application is £100. Not available to support projects/initiatives led by parish or town councils.
<b>Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme</b>	One-off grants for local community projects, ranging from £250 to £10,000 (larger grants are reserved for village halls and recreation facilities).
<b>Substance misuse project grant</b>	Available to groups whose activities address substance misuse. Up to £2500 is available annually for running costs, and £2500 is available for one-off projects.

### 1.2 Drivers for change

1.2.2 The Families and Communities Strategy, published in 2014, outlined a new approach to working with communities, focused on:

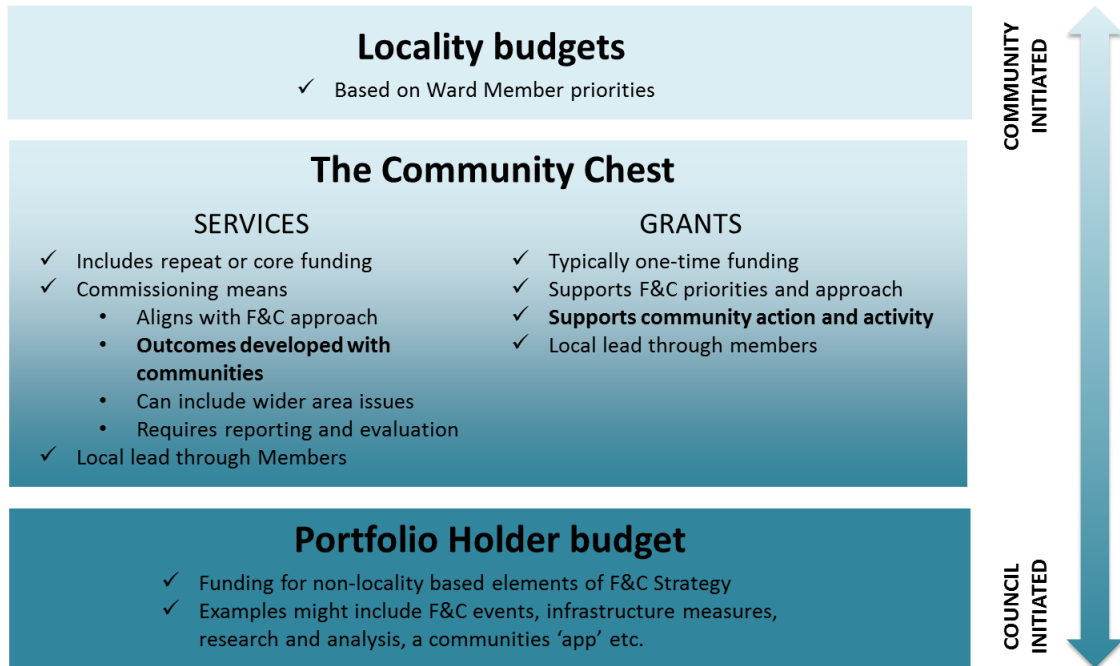
- Building the resilience of communities and individuals to prevent crisis situations from occurring, rather than responding to needs as they arise;
- Communities identifying their priorities for themselves, rather than public sector organisations imposing their perceptions;
- A move from core funding, ring fenced special interest budgets and provision of universal services to a flexible model of commissioning which reflects and responds to local identified outcomes.

- 1.2.3 The "Commissioning Council" model has been widely adopted by many councils with the intent of aligning spending with the desired outcomes of the council. The commissioning cycle starts with identifying a need and deciding whether the goods or service can be provided best in-house. This is known as a "build or buy" decision. The service or goods are then described, a request for bids placed and an award made. This can involve negotiations to qualify bidders' abilities and also the methods they propose to use. The commissioning process continues with the monitoring of delivery and a final review to establish whether or not the outcomes have been achieved. The weakness of this is that it continues to foster a "doing things to/for communities" approach, and important aspects of co-production and co-design with those directly involved in the service are excluded.
- 1.2.4 A review of the council's current funding arrangements has been conducted leading to the proposals in this report.

### **1.3 Proposed new approach**

- 1.3.1 The following diagram illustrates how funding for work with families and communities will be organised and the mechanisms by which it will be allocated. It represents a simplified mix of funding types, with differing degrees of devolution to local communities.
- 1.3.2 The intention is to ensure that the (i) principle of grass roots and, community led action is supported and encouraged where possible; and (ii) the councillor's role as a community leader is emphasised, which can only strengthen democratic engagement within the community.

## Families and Communities Funding Approach



1.3.3 In summary the three levels work as follows:

- (i) **Locality budgets:** Specific local priorities can be supported, especially where led by the Ward Councillor in their capacity as a community leader. These are awarded against set criteria. They are typically one-off grants. More information is contained in section two below.
- (ii) **Community Chest:** Other community and Councillor led initiatives that exceed Locality Budgets can be bid for from a Community Chest. These will be subject to criteria and process (see Appendix A) and signed off by the Portfolio Holder in conjunction with staff up to the value of the delegation powers, thereafter through the Cabinet process. Requests over the Portfolio Holder delegation responsibility will also be considered by the Grant Working Panel. It is recommended that the level of the Portfolio Holder delegation be set at up to a maximum of £10,000 (see paragraph 1.4.4 below). Request for funding may be one-off grants, or revenue funds for services.
- (iii) **Portfolio Holder budget:** Offers a mechanism for addressing priorities that emerge, or to address issues that impact on a wider geographical scale than can be identified by a single community or Councillor. It also offers a potentially quicker decision which may benefit the applicant.

1.3.4 Grant funding from St Edmundsbury also needs to be set in the wider context of available funding opportunities from other sources, for



example, Suffolk County Council, the Suffolk Community Foundation, town and parish councils and national sources such as those available through Funding Central. In addition, whilst it is not a grant and therefore not detailed in this report, the council has the option to make loans to organisations and this may be an appropriate solution in some circumstances.

- 1.3.5 The funding for the existing Service Level Agreements (SLA) will be moved into the Community Chest arrangement. However, it is important to note that previous agreements will be honoured for their duration, and reviewed at the time determined by the current contract. The remaining funding associated with these agreements is shown in the table at 3.4 below.
- 1.3.6 It is proposed that a Community Chest be created, bringing together the previously unallocated small grant budgets that are not ring-fenced and that fall within the existing base budget. It will also combine the larger 'core budgets' which are currently allocated by the council, albeit as stated above any existing SLAs will be honoured. The funds may be given as grants (one off) or commissioned against agreed outcomes.
- 1.3.7 The Rural Initiative Grant Scheme (RIGS) funding will continue as a ring-fenced grant within the Community Chest until all of the remaining £67,444 of funding has been allocated. No changes to this Scheme are proposed and the criteria for RIGS is contained in Community Chest eligibility criteria document contained in Appendix A.
- 1.3.8 A survey of best practice from other councils suggests that this mix of approaches between grant funding and commissioning would be appropriate, given the scale of the budget in question, and the nature and capacity of the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. It is anticipated that over time the funding patterns will move from predominantly grants to commissioning alongside communities, in order to: (i) allow time for an evidence base to be produced against which to develop outcomes for future commissioning; (ii) build capacity within the VCSE sector; and (iii) trial new community-led approaches.

#### **1.4 How the Community Chest will work**

- 1.4.1 It is proposed that applications for funding from the Community Chest should be considered once a year, each November/December. The November/December Cabinet meeting will be preceded by a discussion of the Grant Working Party. It is proposed that decisions on the allocation of the Rural Initiative Grant Scheme will remain the responsibility of the Grant Working Party until all of the funding has been allocated.
- 1.4.2 Bidders will be invited to bid for funding against criteria primarily through local Councillors and their ward-based activity. However, it is

expected that approaches will also be received as a result of publicity of the Community Chest and awareness raising. Draft eligibility criteria for the Community Chest are attached for discussion at Appendix A and include the importance of Councillor, community or resident-led applications. This criteria will replace the current Grant Policy.

- 1.4.3 It will be important that bidders do not presume that funding will be repeated year on year, and that the case will need to be made for every application for Community Chest funding, albeit there is provision for two/three year funding agreements. A simple application form will be developed setting out the criteria for applicants and providing the necessary information required in order to make an informed decision.
- 1.4.4 It is proposed that the Portfolio Holder is responsible for determining the applications with appropriate support from staff as this reduces bureaucracy and speeds up the process for the applicant. This will require delegated powers that it is recommended be introduced through the revised constitution. It is suggested that this delegation level should be £10,000, in line with the delegation powers of the Grant Working Party for RIGS decisions. Over this level of delegated powers the decision will be approved through the Cabinet process with the support and advice of the Grant Working Party.
- 1.4.5 On occasion the council may lead the commissioning of work by inviting expressions of interest from those who wish to 'bid' to deliver described outcomes. These outcomes will have been identified by the council and based on the available quantitative and qualitative evidence. Bidders will be asked to describe the outcomes they will achieve and how, and the associated funding required.
- 1.4.6 The way we will use commissioning will evolve as further work is done to develop and refine our approach. It is anticipated that there will be a gradual shift from grant funding to commissioning, where appropriate, over the early years of the Community Chest operation.
- 1.4.7 This approach will be reviewed to ensure the guidance is fit for purpose with a full year review to assess whether the objectives are being achieved.

## **1.5 Portfolio holder / officer budget**

- 1.5.1 It is proposed that the Portfolio Holder retains a small budget for research and analysis, strategic or enabling work, or to fund one-off projects that are relevant to the development of the families and communities agenda. The proposed budget for this work is shown in the table at paragraph 3.4 below.

## 2. Locality budget scheme review

2.1 The council introduced a Councillor Locality Budget Scheme for the financial year 2014/2015. The ability to provide some modest funding to help stimulate or support community activity within wards was a new tool provided for Councillors. The scheme complements the move to locality working which forms the basis of the West Suffolk Families and Communities Strategy.

2.2 A wider understanding of the use of the budgets has been developing. The Locality Budget Scheme is becoming more established and councillors are starting to explore what is appropriate for funding with their budgets.

2.3 An overview of the projects which have been supported this financial year are reported on the West Suffolk website:  
[http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data\\_and\\_information/openataandtransparency.cfm](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/openataandtransparency.cfm)

2.4 As at 17 February 2015, the headline figures for the scheme are as follows:

Total budget	£112,500
Total allocated funds	£78,228
Percentage of funds allocated	69%
Number of projects supported	142

2.5 Since its introduction, staff have liaised with Councillors about the allocation of funding and progress on applications. Many Councillors discuss potential applications with staff as they develop. Where the community benefit of the scheme looks marginal, discussions are held to enhance the capacity-building elements so that by the time an application is submitted it fulfils the criteria.

2.6 In order to review the operation of the scheme in its first year, staff contacted all Councillors to gain their views on how the scheme is working. The views of the Grant Working Party were also sought. Feedback suggests that Councillors are overwhelmingly in support of the scheme. That said Councillors felt that there could be more clarity on what the funding could be spent on as well as better publicity of the scheme. Additionally Councillors in some rural areas had found it difficult to spend as fewer community organisations are available to encourage to apply.

2.7 Taking into account the learning from the scheme over the past year, revised guidance has been produced to assist Councillors to develop the scheme further and ensure that funding is getting to the heart of community matters. The revised guidance and application form can be seen in Appendix B and C.

2.8 Specific revisions to the scheme are summarised as follows:

- (i) A tightening of the guidance to encourage councillors to support projects which are aligned to the Families and Communities Strategy. This centres on encouraging residents to explore their strengths and assets (Appendix B, 1.3).
- (ii) The inclusion that in some cases funding may be granted to some rural parish councils to support community projects and activities. Previously all parish councils were excluded from the scheme. For the purposes of this scheme, a rural parish is defined as having a population of 1,000 or fewer (Appendix B, 1.7).
- (iii) An inclusion in the essential criteria that councillors should satisfy themselves that the organisation does not have existing funds or significant unallocated/uncommitted reserves that could fund the project or activity (Appendix B, 2.9).
- (iv) The inclusion of referral to the Portfolio Holder of any applications where staff are unsure whether a project meets the criteria of the scheme (Appendix B, 4.2).
- (v) A maximum of £500 of unallocated funds be carried forward per year. This is an amendment to the current criteria which allows for a carry forward in one year only. This revision also includes arrangements for funding should a Ward seat become vacant (Appendix B, 4.5).
- (vi) Revised application form to provide details on how the project will enable communities, build relationships and encourage new connections (Appendix C).

2.9 The revised application form has been designed to make it easier for Councillors to consider the merits of a community project or activity with some explanatory notes to accompany the form. An on-line form will be introduced which can be submitted electronically to the assigned Families and Communities Officer. Hard copies of the form will continue to be accepted.

2.10 Subject to approval by Cabinet the agreed changes will come into effect after the Elections in May 2015, providing newly elected Councillors a foundation for their work in the community.

### **3. Financial implications**

3.1 During discussions to balance the budget, a saving of £45,000 was proposed for families and communities grant funding for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 to secure balanced budgets. In order to meet this savings requirement, while still allowing sufficient funding for a viable offer to local communities, the council has allocated £55,000 from the 'Delivering our Strategic Priorities and MTFs reserve' to support the

new approach to grant funding arrangements. By 2017/2018, it is recommended that the full cost of the Community Chest is assimilated into the council's base budget.

- 3.2 The Locality Budget Scheme is to be funded from 'Delivering our Strategic Priorities and MTFS reserve' as this is considered an investment in the strengthening of local networks, groups and capacity building within communities. It is proposed that any Locality Budget underspend, with the exception of the £500 per Councillor carry-forward, be retained within the Locality Budget fund for future spending.
- 3.3 In the longer term, it is intended that the proposed approach to families and communities funding will start to result in savings to other parts of the council's work. At present, this is difficult to quantify, and is an example of where Portfolio Holder investments in evaluation and analysis will be important to develop an approach.
- 3.4 An overview of the funding available over the next two years is outlined in the table below:

<b>Funding stream</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
<b>Locality budgets</b>	£112,500	£112,500
<b>Community chest</b> (Existing service level agreements and contracts with voluntary and community organisations)	£334,470 (including £293,720 committed via SLAs)	£336,470 (none committed)
<b>Rural Initiative Grant Scheme</b> (ring-fence within the Community Chest )	£67,444	
<b>Portfolio Holder budget</b>	£15,267	

## Draft criteria for Community Chest Grant funding and Rural Area Initiative funding

### 1. Community Chest grant funding

#### 1.1 *Proposed selection criteria*

Successful applications will:

- arise out of the **community's desire to improve the lives of local people**. Successful applications will demonstrate the support of the local community, for example, by providing evidence of community engagement and consultation that has taken place;
- demonstrate how the funding will **build the capacity of the local people** to support one another, thereby decreasing dependence on public bodies;
- demonstrate how the funding will **build the capacity of the voluntary, community or social enterprise sector**; describe the **outcomes** that the funding will achieve in West Suffolk;
- be supported by a sound **evidence base** justifying why action is needed. This can be in the form of quantitative or qualitative evidence, and may be locally collected, or based on existing research or datasets;
- demonstrate how the proposed activity will contribute to [West Suffolk's strategic objectives](#) and specifically its [Families and Communities Strategy](#) ;
- **promote innovation** in community development, for example, by trialling new approaches to supporting local communities that could be replicated elsewhere in West Suffolk and beyond; and
- **support partnership working**. Bids for funding for joint projects between two or more organisations or groups will be welcomed.

#### 1.2 *Proposed eligibility criteria*

Successful applications will meet the following criteria:

##### **The bidder:**

- is a **voluntary, charitable, community, faith group or social enterprise organisation** and not an individual, business, public body or political party;
- must support the councils' **equality policy**;
- must have in place the necessary **safeguarding policies and checks**, if working with children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- have a **bank account in the name of the organisation**;
- must have in place appropriate **insurance, risk assessments and/or health and safety policies**;
- will agree to **publicise the support of the West Suffolk councils** on any publicity material relating to the funded project/activity; and
- will **report regularly to the West Suffolk councils** on the use of the funding and its impact, including progress towards any agreed outcomes or targets.

### **1.3 The funding**

- is for work or activities which are going to happen **in the future** ( no retrospective applications);
- is **not primarily for research or analysis**;
- is for work that will predominantly benefit **people who live or work in Forest Heath District Council or St Edmundsbury Borough Council**;
- is **not for the sole purpose of promoting a religious or non-religious belief or philosophy or party political view**;
- will **not be used for any fraudulent or illegal activity** or any practices which would bring West Suffolk councils into disrepute;
- will **not be used for work or activities that are usually the statutory responsibility of a public body** (for example, highway maintenance, mainstream education provision);
- will, where possible, be **match funded** by funding from other organisations. Funding will not be awarded from more than one West Suffolk grant programme for the same work; and
- should **not usually be used to pay the running costs** of an organisation, except on a seed-funding basis, that is where an initial injection of funding is needed in order to build capacity so as to attract further support; and
- could be for a **period of two years**, but with the option of one or three year grant awards where appropriate.

## **2. Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme**

This is a one-off match-funding grant scheme from £250 up to £10,000, which must be used for a specific capital project. Larger grants of over £4,000 are reserved for village halls and recreation facilities, but smaller grants can also be used for a wide variety of other schemes which benefit rural communities. The organisation will need to sign up to a funding agreement, which will include the standard terms and conditions. Monitoring of the agreement/project will be required to ensure the effective management of resources. The project must contribute to the Council's priorities.

Applications for this grant may be made throughout the year, although an individual organisation cannot re-apply for funding from the Council within two years of a grant being awarded for up to £4,000 and three years for grants approved between £4,001 and £10,000. All applications will be considered by the Grant Working Party which will normally approve grants through an e-mail voting system. Applicants can expect a decision 14 days from receipt of a fully completed application form. However if queries arise a decision make take longer. Should Councillors not reach a consensus via the system of e-mail consideration, a meeting of the Grant Working Party will be convened as soon as is practical. In these circumstances decisions will take considerably longer to reach.

**West Suffolk Locality Budget Scheme  
Guidance for Councillors**

**1. Scheme purpose**

Locality budgets have been designed to ensure that funding can get right to the heart of local communities, via the ward councillor, to enable projects and activities which communities care about to develop, grow and succeed.

- 1.1 The objective of the scheme is for the funding to be used in building capacity and resilience in local communities, helping residents to take ownership of and make a difference to the issues they care most about locally.
- 1.2 £2,500 is allocated per Councillor for each financial year (April to March) with the exception of an election year. For information relating to election years, please see paragraph 4.4.
- 1.3 Funding can be used for new or existing small scale community-based projects or activities carried out by community groups working in the Councillor's own ward that support the delivery of the [Families and Communities Strategy](#). This centres on encouraging residents to explore their strengths and assets, an approach which is underpinned by the [West Suffolk Strategic Plan](#).
- 1.4 In special cases, as well as using the locality budget to support a project in his or her ward area, it is possible for more than one councillor to club together to support a project that crosses ward boundaries, or for a councillor to work together with a county councillor using funding from his/her county locality budget. However, projects covering the whole borough or district are not considered suitable for this funding.
- 1.5 Councillors should satisfy themselves that the project or activity being funded would improve the community or environment and enhance the quality of life for local residents. The project or activity should also have wider community support.
- 1.6 The funding must be used by community groups. Community groups are; groups which are not public or local authorities, (such as county, borough, district, town and parish councils) or businesses operated solely for profit. There is an exception for some rural parishes, see 1.7 below. The activities of the community group will be primarily for the benefit of the community. The way in which groups demonstrate community benefit will vary depending on their legal form.
- 1.7 As community activity in many rural areas is often led or supported by the parish council funding may in exceptional cases be granted to support activities which are for the benefit of the community, but



which are directly delivered by the rural parish councils. For the purposes of this scheme, a rural parish council is considered to be a parish with a population of 1,000 or fewer according to the latest mid-year estimate figures<sup>1</sup>. Funding must not be used to supplement services or functions provided by the parish council which are or could normally be provided through its own resources. Members should be satisfied that the request for funding for the rural parish meets all the requirements (as summarised in 1.5 of this guidance).

- 1.8 Councillors are encouraged to suggest changes to a project or activity that does not meet the criteria in its current format but with some changes would be a better reflection of the aims identified in the Families and Communities Strategy. If this is the case Councillors in discussion with the Families and Communities Officer can make suggestions to the community group and place conditions on the funding to ensure that the funding is within the scheme.
- 1.9 Care should be taken with funding events – these should demonstrate clearly the residual benefit to the community after the event is completed (see 1.1 above). This might be the formation of a new community group, stronger links within the community or greater resident involvement after the event.
- 1.10 Locality budgets may not normally be used to subsidise events that generate their own revenues, for example through ticket sales, admission fees, sales of goods or services within the event. However, consideration would be given to supporting events which generate revenues for the benefit of the community. In other words, residual community benefit, not commercial benefit, must be the central feature of the event or project.

## **2. Essential criteria**

The scheme is governed by criteria to ensure that the funding has the greatest impact on the quality of life for residents in the district / borough and ensures probity, value for money and accountability.

Councillors are responsible for satisfying themselves that the following essential criteria have been met by using a checklist included in the funding application form.

- 2.1 The funding awarded must be at least £100.
- 2.2 The funding must go to a community group, NOT an individual, public body, profit-making organisation or national charity (with the exception of rural parish councils as set out in 1.7 above).

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<sup>1</sup> Mid-year estimates are published by the Office for National Statistics and the latest published figures should be used, with the exception of mid-year 2013 as these figures are incorrect. ONS will rectify the errors when mid-year 2014 data are published.

- 2.3 The granting of the funding is a one-off and does not imply an ongoing commitment by the council or have a revenue implication for the council.
- 2.4 The activity being funded has not already taken place.
- 2.5 The project or activity promotes communities working together and results in greater community involvement in a project and/or connecting people and organisations in new or stronger ways.
- 2.6 The project or activity does not unfairly discriminate against people from different backgrounds as described in the West Suffolk Equalities Scheme. (hyperlink to be added)
- 2.7 The funding should be used by the community group during the 12 months following receipt or should be paid back in full.
- 2.8 As far as the Councillor is aware, making the payment to the community group would not result in fraudulent or illegal activity or any practices which would bring the council into disrepute.
- 2.9 Councillors should satisfy themselves that the organisation does not have existing funds or significant unallocated/uncommitted reserves that could fund the project or activity.

### **3. How the scheme works** (see also chart at Annex A)

- 3.1 Councillors publicise the Locality Budget scheme in their wards to a wide variety of community groups.
- 3.2 Community groups make their funding needs known to Councillors.
- 3.3 Councillors request supporting information from community groups about projects which may be eligible for locality budget support.
- 3.4 Councillors consider community groups' funding needs against the purpose of the scheme and essential criteria.
- 3.5 Where projects meet the scheme's purpose and essential criteria, Councillors complete a formal assessment on the application form, recommending the funding of a project or activity and providing the necessary supporting information. Councillors may propose changes to a project to meet the scheme's criteria and should discuss this possibility with the Families and Communities Officer.
- 3.6 Where a Councillor believes they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in the community group, the approval of the Council Leader or Deputy Leader must also be obtained.
- 3.7 Councillors pass completed application forms, with supporting information, to their Families and Communities Officer. This can be

done at any time throughout the year. ([hyperlink to F&C Officers and on-line application form](#))

- 3.8 The Families and Communities Officer considers the information provided on the form and checks with the finance team that sufficient funds are available.
- 3.9 If everything is in order, the Families and Communities Officer authorises the payment and informs the ward Councillor, inviting them to let the community group know that the funding has been approved.
- 3.10 The Families and Communities Officer writes to the community group asking for confirmation that the funding will be spent on the intended purpose and their payment information (BACS transfer or cheque) and agreement regarding publicity.
- 3.11 The community group returns its confirmation form and the finance team arranges for payment to be made.
- 3.12 Once the project has been completed, the community group contacts the Families and Communities Officer confirming that the money has been spent and provides evidence of expenditure.
- 3.13 Councillors liaise with the community group and the Families and Communities Officer to publicise the award and outcome of the funding.

#### **4. Further details**

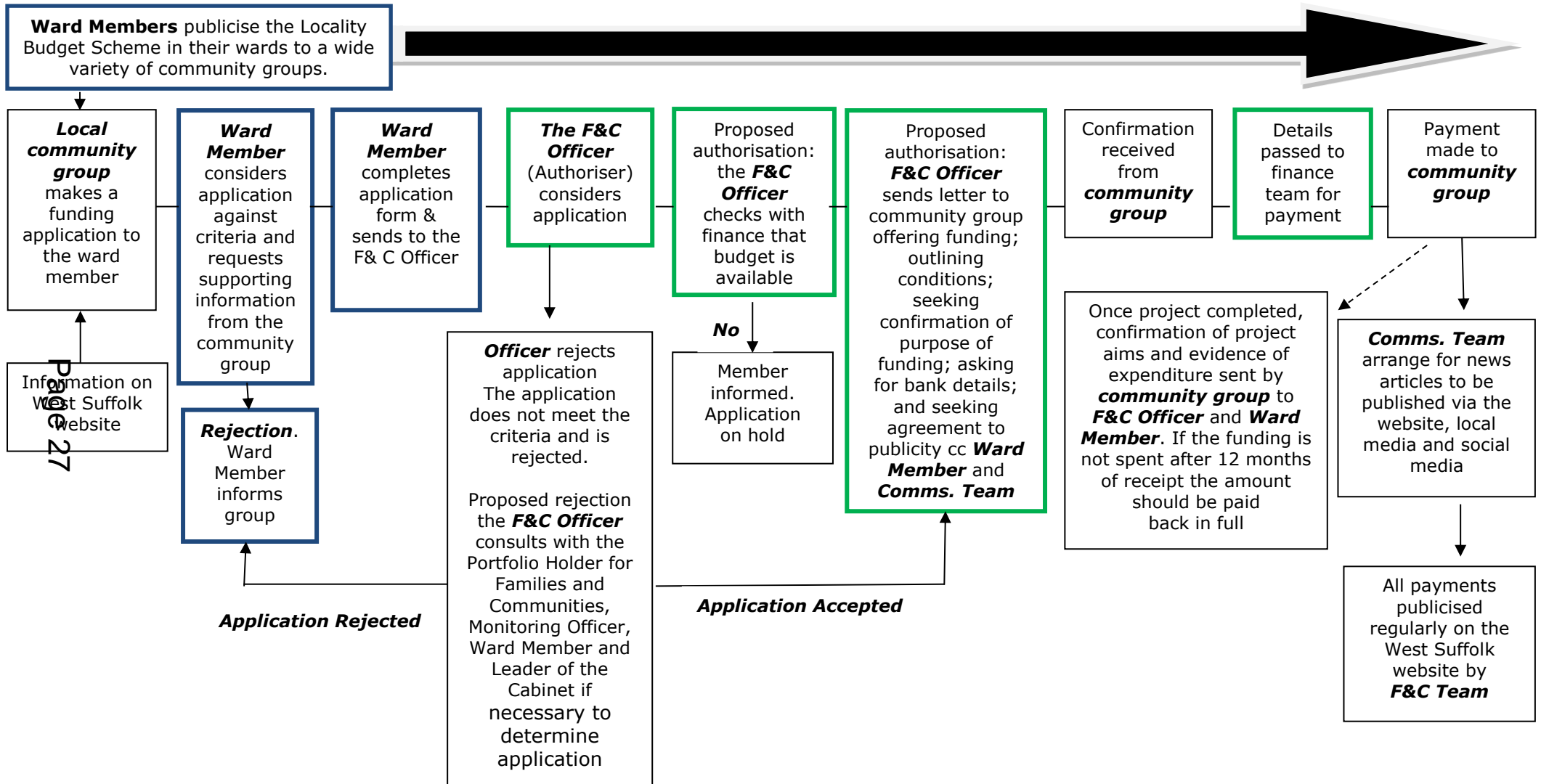
- 4.1 The Families and Communities Officers will ensure that the criteria and purpose of the scheme are met and provide advice to ward Councillors should this not be the case.
- 4.2 If Families and Communities Officers are unsure whether the application meets the scheme's purpose and/or criteria, or the Councillor who originated the application is unhappy with the decision of the Families and Communities Officer, the Families and Communities Portfolio Holder will make a decision.
- 4.3 In the event that the Councillor who originated the application is still unhappy with this decision, or the Portfolio Holder is unable to make a decision, then a decision will be made by the Leader of the Council in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer.
- 4.4 Councillors may check the funds available in their locality budget at any time by contacting their Families and Communities Officer.
- 4.5 At the end of a year, up to £500 per Councillor of unallocated funds can be carried forward into the next financial year. In an election year there will be no carry forward. If a by-election is held, the remaining locality budget will be automatically transferred to the newly elected

Councillor for that ward. If, in the event of a vacancy there is no by-election, any remaining money in the locality budget for the vacant seat will be determined by the Portfolio Holder to ensure that the money is not lost to that ward.

- 4.6 Prior to an election, there will be a period during which no announcements or payments can be made, starting from the date of the notice of election until the election itself. During this period, applications received which meet the criteria of the scheme, will be acknowledged by the Families and Communities Officer but will not be determined until after the election in the usual way, in consultation with the new ward Councillor.
- 4.7 Details of locality budget spending will be published regularly on the West Suffolk website.

**Last updated: 04 March 2015**

## Annex A – West Suffolk Locality Budget Scheme Process



**West Suffolk Locality Budgets: Application Form  
Financial Year 2015 – 2016**

Councillors should complete this form and return to: Families and Communities,  
District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7EY  
01638 719763 / [richard.baldwin@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:richard.baldwin@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

<b>Councillor's name</b>	
<b>Ward</b>	

<b>Name of project</b>	
<b>Name of group to be supported</b>	
<b>Contact name</b>	
<b>Has the contact given consent to their details being given to the Council so that we can contact them? (If no, please gain the group's consent before proceeding with this application)</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone number</b>	
<b>E-mail address</b>	

<b>Question</b>	<b>Supporting Information</b>
<p><b>Full description of application</b></p> <p>(including anticipated timescales)</p> <p><b>What outcomes will the funding achieve?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enabling communities</li> <li>2. Building relationships</li> <li>3. Encouraging new connections</li> </ol> <p><b>Who will benefit?</b></p> <p><b>How does it link with the West Suffolk Families and</b></p>	

<b>Communities Strategy?</b>	
<p><b>Amount to be paid to the group from your locality budget</b> <i>(minimum £100)</i></p> <p><b>Breakdown of costs</b></p>	
<p><b>Is any match funding available and if so, how much and who from?</b></p>	
<p><b>Do you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in this organisation?</b></p> <p><i>(If yes, please give a brief description and obtain the agreement of the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council to the assessment on the following page)</i></p>	
<p><b>What supporting information has been obtained from the organisation to enable you to make a judgement regarding suitability for funding?</b></p> <p><i>(please attach a copy of the information to this form)</i></p>	
<p><b>Evaluation:</b></p> <p><b>Please provide details of how the project will be evaluated, how it will become sustainable and what the lasting impact will be?</b></p>	

**COUNCILLOR RECOMMENDATION**

Funding can only be made available for projects or activities that meet the following essential criteria. Please place an "x" in the box if you are satisfied that the project or activity you are proposing to support meets each criterion.

The payment must be more than £100.	
The funding must go to a community group, <b>NOT</b> an individual	
The granting of the funding is a one-off and does not imply an ongoing commitment by the Council or have a revenue implication for the Council	
The activity being funded has not already taken place	
The project or activity promotes communities working together and does not unfairly discriminate against people from different backgrounds	
The funding can be used by the community group during the 12 months following receipt	
As far as you are aware, making the payment to the community group would not result in fraudulent or illegal activity or any practices which would bring the Council into disrepute	
The community group does not hold significant unrestricted funds	

<b>Name</b>			
<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date</b>	

Where a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest has been declared, the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Cabinet's agreement to the following statement must be obtained below.

"I am satisfied that this application for funding is based on an objective assessment of the evidence and am content for the application to proceed"

<b>Name</b>			
<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date</b>	





## **Application Form Questions and Supporting Information**

### Description of application

A full description of the project is required including the anticipated timescales. Information which has been supplied by the group should be included within the 'supporting information' section following your discussion with the group.

### What outcomes will the funding achieve?

Enabling the community - Explain how the community is enabled to do more for themselves as a result of this project.

Building relationships – Explain how the event or project will build stronger relationships in the community.

Encouraging new connections – Explain how the event or project will make new connections between residents within the community.

### Who will benefit?

You should detail an overview of who will benefit from the project, approximate ages and numbers as well as where they are from.

### How does it link with the Families and Communities Strategy?

You should link the project back to the principles of the [Families and Communities Strategy](#) of supporting families and strengthening communities to enable them to become more resilient and more able to help themselves.

### Amount to be paid to group

This should include a breakdown of cost so that it is clear what the funds will be spent on.

### Supporting Information

The community group requesting funds should give further details on their general activities as well as their aspirations for the project or event.

### Evaluation

The community group should be asked how they intend to evaluate the activities and then feed them back to the Member. It is also important that groups can demonstrate a lasting impact for one-off community events.

### Parish Councils

As detailed in the Councillor Guidance funds can be granted to support activities which are for the benefit of the community, but which are directly delivered by a rural parish council. For the purposes of this scheme, a rural parish council is considered to be a parish with a population of 1,000 or fewer.



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