

Grant Working Party



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Update on: Core Grants; the Rural Initiative Grant Scheme; Member Locality Budgets; and Streamlining the Grant Funding Process	
Report No:	GWP/SE/15/001 [to be completed by Democratic Services]	
Report to and date/s:	Grant Working Party	12 January 2015
Portfolio holder:	Sara Mildmay-White Portfolio Holder for Health and Communities Tel: 01359 270580 Email: sara.mildmay-white@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Davina Howes Head of Families and Communities Tel: 01284 757070 Email: davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To update the Grant Working Party on current commitments to (i) Core Grant funding for community organisations; (ii) the Rural Initiative Grants Scheme; (iii) Member locality budgets and (iv) streamlining the grant funding process.	
Recommendation:	The Grant Working Party is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the contents of the report.	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>The key decision made as a result of this report will be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until seven working days have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i>		
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable 	
Implications:		
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See body of report. 	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of the Council's policies for the awarding of grants. 	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Not applicable		Not applicable	
Ward(s) affected:		All Ward/s	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

The Council is committed to supporting voluntary organisations and community groups which operate within St Edmundsbury and whose services support the Council's priorities. The Council has, for many years, given grants totalling many thousands of pounds to a range of voluntary organisations, including those which provide advice and support to individuals, community organisations, residents groups, parish councils, sports clubs and art and cultural bodies.

1.1 Core Grants 2014/2015 and 2015/2016

Core Grants are available to support the running costs of an organisation which provides a service to people in St Edmundsbury. Organisations may apply for funding for up to three years. The Council and the applicant decide a funding agreement which sets out what the organisation will provide over the duration of the agreement. The funding agreement is more detailed for larger grants, and in these cases the Council may require a service level agreement and specific performance monitoring arrangements. Applications for core funding must be received by the 1st of October each year in order that the Grant Working Party can consider applications in time for the Council's budget setting process.

1.2 Applications are considered by the Grant Working Party which makes recommendations to Cabinet.

1.3 Core Grants that have already been approved for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 are as follows:

Organisation	2014/15	2015/16
Optua Advice & Advocacy (Avenues Group)	£1,000	£1,000
St Edmund & Waveney YMCA	£5,000	£5,000
MENTA	£2,970	£2,970
Suffolk Accident and Rescue Service (SARS)	£1,500	No further application received
Three Counties Transport	£2,500	£2,500
Suffolk West CAB	£181,800	£181,800
Community Action Suffolk (CAS)	£18,000	No further application received
Gatehouse Caring in West Suffolk	£4,000	£4,000
REACH Haverhill Foodbank	£3,750	£3,750
Relate Norfolk & Suffolk	£5,000	£5,000
Haverhill Community Grants	£50,000	£50,000
Suffolk Community Foundation Sports Fund		£10,000

1.4 As at December 2014, one application for 2015/2016 Core Funding has been received from the Suffolk Young People's Health Project. There are a few elements of the application which are unclear and we have asked for clarity. We will be discussing the opportunities for partnership working and will update the Working Party when these areas are clarified.

2. Substance Misuse Core Grants 2014 /2015 and 2015/2016

- 2.1 Revenue grants are available to support initiatives which address substance misuse. Up to £2,500 is available annually for core funding. Grants may be awarded to cover periods of up to three years. Between £250 and £2,500 can be applied for to support one-off projects. Project funding applications are considered by the Grant Working Party which will normally approve grants through an email voting system. Applications can be made by any constituted organisation working to tackle drug or alcohol problems in St Edmundsbury.
- 2.2 Approved applications for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 are as follows:

Organisation	2014/15	2015/16
Open Road	£2,500	£2,500
Art Heads	£2,320	

- 2.3 There remains £180 in the Substance Misuse Grants fund to support one-off projects for 2014/2015 and £2,500 available for financial year 2015/2016.

3. Grants of £250 or less

- 3.1 Grants of up to £120 are available to Residents' Associations from a small annual budget. This grant is only available to groups with less than five years' worth of annual funding in their accounts. A £250 pump-priming grant is also available for eligible groups in their first year of operation. Applications for these grants may be made throughout the year, and will be decided by officers in accordance with the policy and the Council's priorities under delegated authorities. Residents' Associations supported in 2014/2015 so far are as follows:

- Horringer Court Residents Association
- Mildenhall Road Estate Residents Association
- Moreton Hall Residents Association
- Nowton Resident Association
- Southgate Area Residents Association

4. Rural Initiative Grant Scheme (RIGS)

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The organisation is required to sign up to a funding agreement, which includes 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.
- 4.3 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 are considered by the Grant Working Party which will normally consider grants through an email

voting system.

4.4 Funding allocated for the financial year 2014/2015 is as follows:

Organisation	Activity	Funding Approved
Lidgate Parish Council	Play facilities	£2,909.00
Barrow Village Hall	Play facilities	£10,000.00
Barrow Archery Club	Community activities	£1,500.00
Great Barton Parish Council	New village sign	£2,000.00
Honington and Sapiston Village Hall	New kitchen	£6,303.00
Rougham Playing Field Association	Defibrillator	£948.00
Bradfield St Clare Village Hall	Improved community facilities	£450.00
All Saints Church Rooms, Stanton	Improved community facilities	£2,185.00
Bradfield Combust Village Hall	Exterior restoration	£4,000.00

4.5 As at December 2014, the remaining balance for RIGS stands at £63,444.

5. Member Locality Budgets

5.1 During 2014/2015, St Edmundsbury has been trialling Member Locality Budgets. Criteria have been established to identify the type of activity which can be supported as part of this budget. All enquiries and requests for funding are directed to the local ward Councillor. As at end December 2014:

- 77 community projects have been supported
- £40,303 has been allocated
- Average grant awarded - £523.42
- 35% of the allocated annual budget of £112,500 has been committed so far this year
- 36 out of 45 Members had awarded some of their allocation.

5.2 Following discussions with both Councillors and staff it is clear that publicising projects which have benefitted from locality budget funding could be improved. It is not always easy to publicise a project as soon as funding is allocated as it can take some time for projects to be completed. The Families and Communities Team will work with colleagues in the Communications Team to improve publicity and generate interest in the scheme. However, Councillors also play an important role as a key influencer in their community.

5.3 A review of the Member Locality Budget Scheme will take place before the end of the 2014/2015 financial year and will consider its effectiveness, process and criteria, as well as consider the publicity of the scheme. Further details on this will be discussed later on this agenda.

6. Streamlining the grant funding process

6.1 One of the Council's priorities is to 'help families and communities become more resilient' with a range of enabling, empowering and early intervention tools, which result in a reduced need for costly crisis management. The Council recognises that it cannot achieve this on its own; working towards this

vision will require effective partnerships with a range of organisations, including those in the voluntary sector and local community groups.

- 6.2 The grant funding streams outlined in this report have been in operation for a number of years. It is now felt appropriate to review the Council's approach to grant funding given the following factors:
1. the Council's current financial situation (and all public and voluntary sector funding) with the ongoing reduction in government grant and the reliance on more local funding through commercial activities, council tax and business rate collection;
 2. adoption of a West Suffolk Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy which outlines three priorities, including families and communities;
 3. greater alignment with Forest Heath as a West Suffolk partner to ensure that organisations that seek funding across the area benefit from a consistent approach;
 4. need to ensure a complementary approach to other sources of funding/commissioning across West Suffolk including West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, Suffolk Foundation, and Suffolk County Council; and
 5. a number of the three-year Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are due to end in March 2016 so any changes to funding arrangements need to be communicated to organisations well in advance.
- 6.3 Given the above it would be appropriate to simplify funding arrangements and create a single pot possibly known as a 'Community Chest' which communities and organisations can bid into, for larger projects against concerns identified by communities and that are a priority for the council. Where locality budgets address small, local projects, a 'Community Chest' might include support for bigger social issues such as help for young mothers, advice on debt etc. These are often covered by SLAs with charitable groups.
- 6.4 It is envisaged that the pot will be formed by merging all the previously allocated small grant budgets (such as the youth, community development and, community safety budgets) that are not ring fenced and that fall within the base budget already. It also includes existing contracts and Service Level Agreements. Note that these will be honoured for their duration, and reviewed against community demand at the time determined by the current contract. The main impact of this is that a proportion of the Community Chest is pre-allocated against existing SLAs (such as the CAB, CAS etc.). It is suggested that RIGS is not included in this funding because it was established and ring-fenced for a specific purpose.
- 6.5 By moving to a separate 'Community Chest' budget we can clearly analyse and monitor the funding to ensure this is making the expected difference, where outcomes are achieved and that families and communities are thriving.

- 6.6 The key to a successful Community Chest will be clear governance, guidelines and conditions to ensure that it is distributed fairly across the Borough (not necessarily equally) and does not have a time consuming application or administrative process.
- 6.7 As part of development of a streamlined approach to grant funding, the views and opinions of the Grant Working Party are sought. A facilitated discussion session has therefore been added as a separate item on this agenda.