

Cabinet Member for Communities Agenda

Date: Monday, 27th July, 2015
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

In accordance with Procedure Rules Nos.11 and 35 a period of 10 minutes is allocated for members of the public to address the meeting on any matter relevant to the work of the body in question. Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes but the Chairman or person presiding will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned where there are a number of speakers. Members of the public are not required to give notice to use this facility. However, as a matter of courtesy, a period of 24 hours' notice is encouraged.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given.

4. **Allocation of Community Grants** (Pages 1 - 10)

To consider the allocation of community grants to voluntary and community organisations.

5. **Policy for the Support to Infrastructure Organisations for 2015/16** (Pages 11 - 18)

To consider the amended policy for support to Infrastructure Organisations, and to agree the funding grants proposed.

For requests for further information

Contact: Julie North

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Communities

Date of Meeting: 27th July 2015
Report of: Principal Manager – Partnerships & Communities
Subject/Title: Allocation of Community Grants
Portfolio Holder: Councillor L Gilbert

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 To determine the award of Community Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations which meet the criteria approved by Cheshire East Council. The Council recognises the valuable input that the Voluntary and Community Sector brings to the quality of life in the community. Funding is focussed on those organisations that complement the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan.
- 1.2 The report covers the second round of grants for 2015/16 and makes recommendations totalling £44,680 in line with Cheshire East Council's Policy for the Allocation of Grants.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the following Community Grants be awarded/declined/deferred as indicated:

Events

Alsager Garden's Association	Awarded £150
Beartown Patchwork and Quilters	Deferred
Congleton Musical Theatre	Awarded £1,000
Foden's Brass Band	Awarded £600
Macclesfield Pioneering Women	Awarded £300
Middlewich Vision	Awarded £1,000
OCEAN	Awarded £1,000

Activities

Centre Stage Youth Theatre	Awarded £750
Cheshire Streetwise CIC	Awarded £500
Disley Arts Society	Declined
Friends of Pebble Brook	Declined
Jude Theatre Company CIC	Awarded £720
Juel Entertainers	Awarded £500
Macclesfield Academy Learning Community	Awarded £1,000
Macclesfield Art Group	Awarded £410
Macclesfield Community Artspace	Awarded £1,000
Middlewich Good Neighbours	Awarded £500
Mobility and Access Group (MAG)	Awarded £1,000
Moss Rose Junior Football Team	Awarded £500
Polish Domestic Violence Helpline	Awarded £1,000
Poynton and District Rotary Club	Awarded £750
Sandbach Striders Running Club	Awarded £500

Facilities

17 th South West Cheshire Scout Group	Awarded £5,000
Alsager Community Church	Awarded £2,000
Brook Street Chapel	Declined
Disley Baptist Church	Awarded £5,000
Edge Inclusion Partnership CIC	Declined
Friends of Stanley Hall Park	Awarded £3,000
Haslington Cricket Club	Awarded £2,500
Poynton Methodist Church	Awarded £3,000
Poynton Youth and Community Centre	Awarded £4,000
St Mary's Church, Nantwich	Awarded £5,000
Wheelock Pre-School	Awarded £2,000

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations (details of Grants)

3.1

Events:**Alsager Garden's Association**

Total project cost £1,350	Amount requested £350	Amount awarded £150
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Alsager Gardens Association applies annually towards their annual show. Funding was awarded last year towards advertising and bouquets for the guests. We are unable to provide repeat funding or provide funding to offset losses. They do have contributions from elsewhere and are contributing themselves. It is recommended that they are awarded £150 towards their printing costs.

Beartown Patchwork and Quilters

Total project cost £1,637	Amount requested £100	Deferred
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Beartown Patchwork and Quilters are holding an exhibition of members work. Funding is required towards printing and publicity costs. The group are contributing the remainder of the project costs themselves. As the event is not due to take place until summer 2016 and the group have not submitted the bank account figures or a safeguarding policy, it is recommended that the application is deferred to the next round pending the receipt of this information.

Congleton Musical Theatre

Total project cost £17,340	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £1,000
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Congleton Musical Theatre require funding towards sound and lighting hire costs for their production that is currently being rehearsed and will be performed in October. The majority of the costs are being funded by ticket sales and there is a contribution from organisation funds and the town council. It is recommended that they are awarded £1,000.

Foden's Brass Band

Total project cost £2,800	Amount requested £800	Awarded £600
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Foden's Brass Band are holding a solo and quartet contest which attracts around 170 competitors, attracts local community members to the audience and local residents help to run the event. Costs of the event include trophies, printing, advertising, pianist costs. The group are contributing themselves and will have income from ticket costs as well as sponsorship. It is recommended that they are awarded £600 and that they also seek support from the Town Council.

Macclesfield Pioneering Women

Total project cost £1,582	Amount requested £300	Awarded £300
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Macclesfield Pioneering Women require funding towards the costs of external speakers attending their event to showcase the achievements of local women in Macclesfield, as well as their contributions to the history and culture of the area. The group will be contributing to the event themselves and have sponsorship and donations. It is recommended that they are awarded £300.

Middlewich Vision

Total project cost £3,390	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £1,000
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Middlewich Vision requires funding for the delivery of a writing and creative skills festival aimed at encouraging writing and literary skills. Costs include advertising, printing, workshops and design/content of website. The group are contributing themselves and they have other contributions. It is recommended that they are awarded £1,000.

OCEAN

Total project cost £2,838	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £1,000
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OCEAN is holding a two day event to celebrate Black History Month. Funding is required towards advertising, printing, performers and a DJ. They are contributing to the event themselves and have contributions from elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded £1,000.

Activities:**Centre Stage Youth Theatre**

Total project cost £12,770	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £750
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Centre Stage Youth Theatre is performing 'Starlight Express' which will be performed on wheels. Funding is required towards costumes (roller-skates and knee/elbow pads) and props/scenery. The group are contributing themselves and have income from ticket sales. It is recommended that they are awarded £750 and that funding from other sources is sought towards remaining project costs.

Cheshire Streetwise CIC

Total project cost £868	Amount requested £868	Awarded £500
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Cheshire Streetwise require funding to provide music activities for young people with learning difficulties with an aim of improving speech and communication, listening skills, motor skills through dancing etc. Costs include a bubble machine, microphone, lighting, mixer desk etc. The organisation are not contributing themselves and do not have contributions from elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded £500 and that they seek support from other funding organisations.

Disley Arts Society

Total project cost £500	Amount requested £500	Declined
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Disley Arts Society applies annually and has requested funding towards art demonstrations and towards life models. Last year, training dvds were funded. The group have little income but have raised some funds through a coffee morning, they have not applied elsewhere. Due to the amount of funding awarded in the past to this organisation, in consecutive years, it is recommended that they seek funding from alternative sources for their project and that the application is declined.

Friends of Pebble Brook

Total project cost £938	Amount requested £938	Declined
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Friends of Pebble Brook require funding to offer parents the opportunity to plan, prepare and make a healthy family meal with their children once a week. Families will be targeted. The group are not contributing to the project and have no other contributions. As this project is not accessible to the wider community and is for the benefit of pupils of a school, it is recommended that the application is declined and that support is sought from the local housing association.

Jude Theatre Company

Total project cost £1,742	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £720
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Jude Theatre Company requires funding for lead artist fees for the delivery of a theatre programme, aimed at over 18s with learning difficulties or disabilities. The theme will be developing skills towards greater independence through role play. The group are not contributing to the project themselves, and do not have contributions from elsewhere but have got in kind contributions. It is recommended that they are awarded £720 towards the project and that they also seek support from other funding organisations.

Juel Entertainers

Total project cost £4,700	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £500
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Juel Entertainers are a new dance group that are applying for funding towards the costs of costumes for their dancers which are needed for an upcoming presentation evening and throughout the year at shows and competitions. The group are contributing themselves but have not applied elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded £500 (subject to receipt of safeguarding policy) to help with establishment of the group and that that also apply to the Town Council.

Macclesfield Academy Learning Community

Total project cost £1,750	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £1,000
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Macclesfield Academy Learning Community require funding to run a summer school for 1 week during the summer break with an aim of reducing anti-social behaviour on the estate through the summer. Costs include music tutors and coach costs. A contribution is being made to the project but they have not applied elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded £1,000 towards the music element of the project as travel costs cannot be funded.

Macclesfield Art Group

Total project cost £1,640	Amount requested £410	Awarded £410
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Macclesfield Art Group require funding to purchase exhibition lighting to enhance their display panels when space limitations create shadowed areas during exhibitions. The group are contributing towards the project but have not applied elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded £410 and that they apply elsewhere to avoid depleting their reserves.

Macclesfield Community Artspace

Total project cost £1,640	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £1,000
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Macclesfield Community Artspace requires funding for equipment to carry out a digital art project which will involve intergenerational activities with the use of technology. Costs include a computer, printer, camera, paper, advertising etc. The group are contributing themselves, despite very little reserves and have donations that have been received throughout the year. It is recommended that they are awarded £1,000.

Middlewich Good Neighbours

Total project cost £1,200	Amount requested £950	Awarded £500
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Middlewich Good Neighbours require funding to improve their website, meaning that they could reach more people and aim to engage with younger people to encourage volunteering. An improved website will also allow them to reach people with limited mobility. The group are making a contribution themselves but have no other contributions. It is recommended that they are awarded £500 towards the project and that they also seek support from other funding organisations such as the Town Council.

Mobility and Access Group

Total project cost £2,000	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £1,000
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Mobility and Access Group require funding for a computer, sewing equipment and for the initial set up costs of a luncheon club with an aim of helping the group to develop. Application was deferred in April pending receipt of bank account information which has now been received. The group have a contribution from comic relief. It is recommended that they are awarded £1,000 to help establishment of the group.

Moss Rose Junior Football Team

Total project cost £964	Amount requested £964	Awarded £500
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Moss Rose Junior Football Team require funding towards equipment such as goal nets, whistles, first aid kits, barriers etc. The group are not contributing themselves and have not applied elsewhere. It is recommended that they £500 and seek support from other funding organisations.

Polish Domestic Violence Helpline

Total project cost £92,704	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £1,000
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The Polish Domestic Violence Helpline is newly established and requires funding to assist with their phone line costs and running costs. They are actively applying elsewhere to help with establishment costs and currently have no reserves. It is recommended that they are awarded £1,000.

Poynton and District Rotary Club

Total project cost £2,500	Amount requested £750	Awarded £750
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Poynton and District Rotary Club is undertaking a project to train shop, service desk and public building staff in Poynton to understand the difficulties of those with hearing loss. Costs of the project are for training sessions provided by Action for Hearing Loss. The group are contributing themselves and have other contributions. It is recommended that they are awarded £750.

Sandbach Striders Running Club

Total project cost £3,000	Amount requested £1,000	Awarded £500
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Sandbach Striders require funding towards the one-off cost to establish Park Run events in Sandbach. The payment is to Park Run UK and they are then provided with standardised equipment and training. Parkrun events are community led running events formed for increasing community cohesion which gives participants the opportunity to broaden their social circle. The group have applied to other organisations but are not contributing themselves due to little reserves. It is recommended that they are awarded £500 on the condition of securing the remaining project costs and they apply to Sandbach Town Council also.

Facilities:**17th South West Cheshire Scout Group**

Total project cost £33,074	Amount requested £5,000	Awarded £5,000
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17th South West Cheshire Scout Group requires funding to demolish and rebuild their stores area which is used to house camping equipment. The new area will contain storage space, a toilet, tent drying area and a multi-use space to use as a rifle range. The group have raised funds to contribute to the project and have applied to other organisations. They have already received a Giveback grant towards this project therefore; it is recommended that they are awarded £5,000 on the condition that it is spent of different elements of the project to the Giveback grant.

Alsager Community Church

Total project cost £3,845	Amount requested £3,345	Awarded £2,000
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Alsager Community Church requires funding to install a water supply and drainage into their community support centre. Providing hand washing facilities for volunteers would enable the food bank to offer fresh fruit and vegetables and volunteers could have refreshment and washing up facilities on site. The church are making a small contribution but have not applied elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded £2,000 and that they also seek support from other funding organisations.

Brook Street Chapel

Total project cost £7,894	Amount requested £7,894	Declined
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Brook Street Chapel needs to replace some of the oak beams which have been damaged by a death watch beetle infestation. If the work is not carried out, the building will not be safe for community activity such as women's groups, drama groups, concerts etc. Due to safety issues, the work has already been carried out. As the scheme is unable to fund retrospectively, it is recommended that the application is declined.

Disley Baptist Church

Total project cost £9,724	Amount requested £5,000	£5,000
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Disley Baptist Church is applying for funding to create a safe, attractive outdoor area behind their building to benefit the surrounding community and the community groups that attend the church such as tots time, a dads group, youth club etc. The group have applied to many other organisations for funding and will be contributing to the project. It is recommended that they are awarded £5,000 subject to the successful outcome of applications made to other sources.

Edge Inclusion Partnership CIC

Total project cost £11,220	Amount requested £5,000	Declined
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Edge Inclusion Partnership CIC delivers family support services to families with children with special needs. The organisation requires funding to set up an office base in Cheshire East as team members currently work from home. An office space would enable the group to host meetings with families and will provide a free drop in space for the community that have worries or concerns about the needs of their children. The group will be contributing the remaining project costs themselves but they have not applied elsewhere. It is recommended that the application is declined due to service users being charged and the organisation being in receipt of funding through various Council contracts in which all operational costs are covered.

Friends of Stanley Hall Park

Total project cost £4,712	Amount requested £4,112	Awarded £3,000
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Friends of Stanley Hall Park require funding to make improvements to the park including a picnic area which will be paved with picnic benches. This forms part of a longer, 5 year plan to improve the facilities of the park. The group have little reserves but do have some funds

through fundraising. They have not applied anywhere else. It is recommended that they are awarded £3,000 towards the project and that they seek support from other sources.

Haslington Cricket Club

Total project cost £5,500	Amount requested £5,000	Awarded £2,500
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Haslington Cricket Club requires funding to purchase new mowers for the field. Existing mowers are broken and the grass cannot be cut, meaning the field cannot be used. The ground is open for community use, including schools. The club are making a contribution but have not applied elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded half of the remaining costs of £2,500 and that match funding is sought from other funding providers.

Poynton Methodist Church

Total project cost £4,951	Amount requested £4,451	Awarded £3,000
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Poynton Methodist Church requires funding to upgrade meeting rooms with new flooring and furniture. The rooms are used daily through the church and a wide range of community groups. The church is making a small contribution to the project, despite large reserves and do not have contributions from elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded £3,000 towards the project and that they seek support from other funding organisations.

Poynton Youth and Community Centre

Total project cost £13,100	Amount requested £5,000	Awarded £4,000
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Poynton Youth and Community Centre require funding for the modernisation of the electrical system and fire alarm system. Due to safety concerns, the building is currently closed and groups have been forced to seek alternative accommodation. The centre is contributing to the project, has a fundraising plan in place and has a donation. In order to bring this centre back into use it is recommended that they are awarded £4,000 and that they approach the Town Council.

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

Total project cost £126,000	Amount requested £5,000	Awarded £5,000
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St Mary's Church is undertaking a large project to install toilets and disabled access to the church to provide better facilities for the wide range of community users that visit the church. The toilets will not only serve those visitors of the church but also to Nantwich. This is a large project with a large contribution coming from the church itself as well as many funding applications that the church has been successful with. It is recommended that they are awarded £5,000 on the condition of securing funding for the rest of the project costs.

Wheelock Pre-School

Total project cost £4,890	Amount requested £4,890	Awarded £2,000
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Wheelock pre-school is applying for funding for toilet renovation with an aim of making the building more desirable for community groups. The building is used by cubs, scouts, toddler groups and a choir group. The group are not contributing to the project themselves and have not applied elsewhere. It is recommended that they are awarded £2,000 on the conditions of:

- Applying to other funding sources.
- Showing support from other users of the building to demonstrate wider community benefit than just those attending the preschool.
- Providing proof of support for a lease extension from the building landlord.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 The recommendations relate to all wards within Cheshire East

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All Ward members

6.0 Policy Implications (including carbon reduction and health)

6.1 All of the applications contained in this report have been considered in the light of the Council's Policy for the Allocation of Grants, and the recommendations on each one conform to that Policy.

7.0 Financial Implications (authorised by Chief Operating Officer)

7.1 All of the proposed grants can be funded from within existing budgets approved as part of the Council's Budget for 2015/16

8.0 Legal Implications (authorised by Borough Solicitor)

8.1 The Council has the powers to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making the decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably. A grant policy is a clear statement of the criteria that the Council is applying and is essential if the Council is to defend any challenge to its decision making process.

8.2 Cabinet has approved and Cheshire East Council has put in place a Policy for the Allocation of Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations 2015/16. This Policy deals with the allocation of community grants which are awarded to defined Organisations following an application process and against set criteria. There are conditions requiring that Organisations report back to the Council upon expenditure of the grant and to enable further appropriate conditions to be imposed. The decision making process was delegated to the Portfolio Holder in order ensure that decisions can be made expeditiously and at the appropriate level.

8.3 Grant funding organisations based on the application of the Council's grant policy satisfies the Council's public law duties.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 The risk of not agreeing an approach to funding the community and voluntary sector is that some organisations may be unable to continue their activities, resulting in a loss of community benefit. This is a particular issue during an economic downturn when other funding sources may not be available.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 Applications received and allocated in accordance with Cheshire East Council's Policy for the Allocation of Community Grants.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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000CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Communities

Date of Meeting: Monday 27th July 2015
Report of: Principal Manager – Partnerships and Communities
Subject/Title: Policy for the Support to Infrastructure Organisations for 2015/16
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Les Gilbert

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 To agree a policy which sets out how Cheshire East Council will support Infrastructure Organisations to assist the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Town and Parish Councils (Local Councils) to develop and thrive.

2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 To adopt the amended policy for the Support to Infrastructure Organisations and agree the funding grants as listed below in 3.2

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Partnerships team work closely with infrastructure organisations across the Borough, who offer support to the VCS and Local Councils. The purpose of the support is to increase the capacity and capability of the VCS and the Local Councils across Cheshire East.
- 3.2 To achieve the policy's aims and objectives, it is proposed that Cheshire East Council directly award funding grants to three infrastructure organisations; Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East (CVSCE) a total of £146,838; Cheshire Community Action (CCA) a total of £16,323 and Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) a total of £14,213 giving a total grant award of £177,374.
- 3.3 As we work towards becoming a fully commissioning council, we are working with these infrastructure organisations to grow capacity in the above sector and to prepare organisations and enable them to engage with a competitive process. Consideration is being given going forward as to whether to fund future provision by way of grants, contracts or a mixture of both but in any event a competitive bidding/tendering process will be undertaken.
- 3.4 All organisations are aware that in the next financial year, the process will be for competitive tendering rather than directly awarded grants.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 The recommendations relate to all wards within Cheshire East

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All Ward members

6.0 Policy Implications (including carbon reduction and health)

6.1 Positive Impact

7.0 Financial Implications (authorised by Director of Finance and Business Services)

7.1 The recommendations will enable the three grant awards for 2015/2016 to be funded within existing budget provision.

8.0 Legal Implications (authorised by Borough Solicitor)

8.1 In deciding whether to directly award a grant consideration must be given to the facts and circumstances in which a direct grant award is being proposed as set out in paragraph 3 (as opposed to awarding a grant following a competitive bidding process or going out to tender) together with the identified risks (paragraph 9) and be satisfied that in making a direct award the Council is meeting its public law duties.

8.2 The Council has the powers to award a grant to support the organisations using its general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making the decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably.

8.3 There is currently no overarching Council policy/framework by which grant funding should be allocated and in principle a direct grant award can be made. The proposed Policy for Support to Infrastructure Organisations sets out the aims and objectives in grant funding infrastructure organisations and it is also noted that the Council is moving to a commissioning model and that a competitive process is being developed.

8.5 In awarding a grant the Council cannot exhibit the same amount of control over the organisation as is commensurate with a contract. Essentially the terms of the grant should set out with what the purpose of the grant is for and only claim claw back provisions in the case of the grant funding being used for other purposes or otherwise improperly. The Council will not be able to assess the quality of the services that are being provided to those requiring welfare advice and determine to withdraw grant funding on that basis (except at the end of the period of the grant funding).

9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 The risk of not agreeing an approach to support to Infrastructure Organisations is that the VCS and local councils may not receive the specialised support required in order to both continue and to thrive, resulting in a loss of community benefit.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 A decision is required to agree the funding amounts as listed in 3.2 and to adopt the Policy for Support to Infrastructure Organisations in 2015/16.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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Designation: Principle Manager, Partnerships and Communities

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Support for Infrastructure Organisations

Service owner:	<i>Performance and Partnerships</i>
Policy owner:	<i>Kirstie Hercules, Partnerships and Communities Manager</i> Kirstie.hercules@cheshireeast.gov.uk <i>Tel (01270) 686632</i>
Status:	<i>V0.7</i>
Date:	<i>26th March 2012</i>
Consultation:	<i>None</i>
Revision/review/renew date:	<i>30th April 2012 for approval</i> <i>9th April 2013 for approval</i> <i>21st July 2014 for approval</i> <i>27th July 2015 for approval</i>
Key words:	<i>Summarises Cheshire East Council's approach to supporting infrastructure organisations that provide assistance to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Town and Parish Councils (Local Councils) in the Borough.</i>
Links:	<i>Community Grants Policy</i> <i>Cross Sector Working Group Good Practice Guidelines</i>

1. Executive summary

This Policy details how the Council intends to support infrastructure organisations which assist the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) and Local Councils across Cheshire East to achieve their aims and objectives. For the purposes of the Policy, 'infrastructure organisations' shall mean those organisations that act as an "umbrella" organisation for a wide membership and act as a first point of contact for partner organisations.

Infrastructure Organisations tend not to deliver services direct to the community themselves, but will assist and equip the Voluntary and Community Sector and Town and Parish Councils in order that they can deliver services to the communities which they serve.

2. Introduction

2.1 *Purpose, aims and vision*

The Partnerships and Communities Team work closely in partnership with infrastructure organisations across the Borough who offer guidance, support and services to the VCFS and Local Councils

The purpose of the grant funding provided is to increase the capacity and capability of the VCFS and Local Councils across Cheshire East, and help them to understand and meet the needs of their communities for the wider benefit of all residents within Cheshire East. This is achieved through the provision of advice and guidance, targeted support, outreach services, training and development and other agreed activities.

The Partnerships and Communities Manager manages the Council's budget for supporting infrastructure organisations in line with this Policy. It is our intention to grow capacity in the above sector, and to prepare organisations and enable them to engage with a competitive process in the future.

2.2 *Policy context*

Cheshire East Council understands that providing infrastructure support for the sectors outlined above is vital to ensuring that the VCFS and Local Councils remain strong and can achieve their aims. This policy has been developed to clarify the purpose of the grant funding and the process for the allocation of funds for financial year 2015/16

3. Policy details

3.1 *Funding Policy*

Funding is only available to infrastructure organisations that can support the VCFS or Local Councils to achieve their aims. In order to be successful it is expected that infrastructure organisations will:

- **Identify and fill the gaps** – equipping the VCFS and Local Councils to tailor their services to the changing needs of the community.
- **Raise standards** – by providing access to information, training and quality assurance standards, ensuring the VCFS and Local Councils have the knowledge, skills and resources they need to support the local community.
- **Enable communication and collaboration** - encouraging the VCFS and Local Councils to share resources and to work collaboratively, by providing opportunities to network, and enabling them to share good practice and expertise.
- **Provide a voice** – acting as a conduit and represent the diverse views of the VCFS and Local Councils to the Councils (Borough and Local) and other public bodies. Promote and facilitate two-way communication and consultations so that the VCFS and Local Councils can contribute to discussions and decision-making at a local level.
- **Promote strategic involvement** – encouraging the VCFS and Local Councils to engage in strategic partnerships and actively work with representatives from partner organisations to ensure they are able to identify and seek joint measures to resolve key local issues.
- **Prepare for Commissioning** - to ensure that they maintain a high quality offering and are well positioned to tender to deliver these services in the future.

3.2 Funding Process

The budget is managed by the Partnerships and Communities Manager in the budget year 2015/16, with annual grants agreed with infrastructure organisations. Annual changes to funding are decided by the Partnerships and Communities Manager as the budget holder, in consultation with the Department's Portfolio Holder. It should be noted that we are moving towards a commissioning approach and that a competitive process will be followed in future.

Equality Impact Assessment Screening is carried out annually on all funding changes and if necessary full Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in line with the Council's policy.

Infrastructure organisations will be required to sign an annual funding agreement, which will set out expected outputs and outcomes and provide clear monitoring and reporting arrangements for the financial year.

Funding is paid half yearly, with 50% of the annual allocation being paid from April (as long as ongoing monitoring reports are up to date) and the remainder paid from October. This is upon receipt of satisfactory half yearly reports, or as soon as possible after the receipt of the necessary reports.

3.3 Policy recommendations

To approve the approach to providing support for infrastructure organisations as detailed above.

4. Performance and evaluation

4.1 *Monitoring, evaluation and Review*

This Policy will be monitored and evaluated annually as part of the Council’s business planning process and any changes made will be approved by the Council’s Cabinet.

5. Further information

Further information is available from Kirstie Hercules, Partnerships and Communities Manager.

POLICY APPROVED:

Portfolio Holder Signature:

Date: