

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Strategic Outcomes

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Date of Meeting: | 27 th April 2015 |
| Report of: | Principal Manager – Local Area Working |
| Subject/Title: | Policy for the Allocation of Community Grants |
| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr D Brown |

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 To highlight a number of changes made to the Community Grants Policy for the financial year of 2015/16 and to approve the transfer of the underspend arising from the Giveback Fund to the Community Grant Scheme. The amended policy is attached as an appendix.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To adopt the amended Policy for the Allocation of Community Grants as appended to this report.
- 2.2 To approve the transfer of remaining Giveback funding into the Community Grants Scheme.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder to make further minor amendments to this Policy limited to adding new categories in the event that any additional funding is made available within the 2015/16 budget year and the Portfolio Holder considers it appropriate to add new categories to the scheme to meet the Residents First Outcomes.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Community Grants Policy was first adopted in the financial year of 2009/10 and has been in operation since. Applications are invited from organisations who meet the policy criteria. The Council recognises the valuable input that the voluntary, community and faith sector brings to the quality of life in the community. The scheme has enabled funding to be focused on those organisations that contribute to meeting the Residents First Outcomes.
- 3.2 A total of 129 organisations received funding totalling £225,471 in 2014/15 which has enabled a wealth of community activity to take place with a year on year increase in the number of applications received since the scheme began.

- 3.3 Due to a budget surplus of £900,000 an additional grant scheme was established, entitled the Giveback fund, in July 2014 to fund the following community activity:
 - 3.3.1 Young people's sections of uniformed organisations – total allocation £300,000
 - 3.3.2 Organisations who provide services and support to older people – total allocation £350,000
 - 3.3.3 Domestic abuse support for young people in abusive relationships – total allocation £50,000
 - 3.3.4 Faith organisations who are connecting with communities – total allocation £200,000
- 3.4 Whilst this scheme was very successful there has been an underspend and it is proposed that this is carried over into the Community Grant Scheme budget for 2015/16 as this enables the continuation of funding to the voluntary, community and faith sector, which is what the scheme was established for.
- 3.5 In the event that any other additional monies are made available in 2015/16 it is proposed that this money is added to the community grant scheme to streamline the grants process and make it easier for organisations to understand and apply for funding. In order to accommodate any additional funding the categories to which people can apply to will remain the same, as detailed below:
 - 3.5.1 Events up to £1,000
 - 3.5.2 Activities up to £1,000
 - 3.5.3 Facilities up to £5,000
- 3.6 If the additional monies are sufficient to fund additional categories and as a result minor adjustments to this Policy are required then it is proposed that Cabinet delegate responsibility to the Portfolio Holder to amend this Policy within the 2015/16 budget year.
- 3.7 Priority will be given to organisations and projects that build community resilience and reduce the demand on mainstream services, with a particular focus on activities which contribute positively to people's mental health and wellbeing. Activities can include:
 - 3.7.1 increased community-led and managed activities
 - 3.7.2 increased volunteer numbers
 - 3.7.3 helping people to help themselves and support each other
 - 3.7.4 reduced reliance and demand on mainstream services
 - 3.7.5 improving the mental health and wellbeing of residents
 - 3.7.6 engaging local people through community hubs, existing community groups and their social networks
 - 3.7.7 putting residents first
- 3.8 Priority will also be given to organisations which are based in Cheshire East, have funding contributions from their own funds and/or funding support from

other bodies and have not received a grant from Cheshire East Council previously.

- 3.9 Organisations will be required to demonstrate that their outcomes contribute to Resident First Outcomes 1, 3 and 5 with links to Outcomes 2 and 4.

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

- 6.1 Positive Impact

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The recommendations will enable grant applications for 2015/2016 to be funded within existing budget provision including the additional funding made available from the Giveback fund.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Council has the power 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 The Policy for the Allocation of Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations 2015/16 deals with the allocation of community grants which are awarded to defined Organisations following an application process, and against a 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 is 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 voluntary, community and faith 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.
- 9.2 Not adapting the scheme to incorporate additional funding through robust management of Council funds could result in a delay in providing access to much needed additional funding for the voluntary, community and faith sector.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 A decision is required to enable the allocation of Community Grants to voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.

11.0 Access to Information

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

Name: Steph Cordon

Designation: Head of Communities

Tel No: 01270 686401

Email: steph.cordon@cheshireeast.gov.uk