

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Strategic Outcomes

Date of Meeting:	2 nd June 2014
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 2014/15 which includes additional funding made available and a change to the general conditions.

2.0 Decision Requested

- 2.1 To adopt the amended policy for the allocation of Community Grants.

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 Corporate Objectives.
- 3.2 A large number of organisations have received funding which has enabled a wealth of community activity to take place and we have seen a year on year increase in the number of applications received.
- 3.3 Through reserves, additional funding has been made available after the first round closed for the Community Grant Scheme for 2014/15, which would provide an additional £50,000 for the general grants scheme and £30,000 specifically for First World War commemoration events, which would start from the 2nd round of the scheme in June 2014.
- 3.4 Funding increases will only apply to 2014/15 applications received in the remaining three community grant rounds and may not be available in future financial years and is dependent on future budget allocations.
- 3.5 Due to the increased amount of funding, it is recommended that the events and activities categories are amalgamated into one activity category, with an increased maximum award of £1,000 and a facilities category, with an increased maximum award of £5,000 for 2014/15 only.

- 3.6 It is anticipated that a number of Town and Parish Councils will wish to apply for First World War Commemoration events. As Town and Parish Councils are currently not eligible to apply to the Community Grant Scheme, it is recommended that the Policy is changed to allow Town and Parish Councils to apply for First World War Commemoration events only.
- 3.7 It is also recommended that grant applications without planning permission in place can now be considered if the application is for a feasibility study or architect fees in order to establish the viability of the project.

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

- 7.1 The recommendations will enable grant applications for 2014/2015 to be funded within existing budget provision including the additional funding made available from May 2014.

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 2014/15 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 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.
- 9.2 Increasing the maximum category amounts in this year, for one off additional funding, could result in organisations being disappointed when the funding levels return to their original maximum award amounts.
- 9.3 Not increasing the maximum category amounts in this year could result in the additional funding not being fully allocated.

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:

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