

Report of The Head of Resources

ALLOCATIONS PROCESS FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS

1 Purpose of report

1.1 To set up a member working party to consider the allocations process for voluntary sector grants for 2015-16. This report relates to the achievement of the following priorities:

- a) Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- b) Improving life chances for young people
- c) Delivering efficient and responsive services

1.2 It will ensure that the Council has a robust process in place when allocating grants to the voluntary sector, meeting specified outcomes that match the Council's priorities and available budget.

2 Executive summary

The report recaps the current situation regarding voluntary sector grants and suggests a way forward for the 2015-16 grants round. It recommends that a member working party is reconvened to review the current grants position and consider how the council wishes to fund services in the future.

3 Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft terms of reference for the grants working party

4 Proposed action:

The Committee is invited to RESOLVE that:

4.1 a member working party is set up to review current service level agreement grant arrangements and report back to Resources Committee in Autumn 2014 on recommendations for future service delivery

4.2 the working party membership will comprise: Cllr Bell, Cllr Graves, Cllr Morrall, either Cllr Gough or Cllr Ward, plus a member from the Labour group

5 Background

5.1 The council currently funds a number of voluntary and community organisations to deliver services where the council does not deliver directly; through lack of specialist knowledge or experience, or available resources, and where the voluntary sector can provide good value for money.

5.2 The council has a number of three year service level agreements with voluntary sector organisations that run until 31 March 2015. These were awarded under certain categories and have specified outcomes, affirmed each year at monitoring meetings, to help the council achieve its aims and objectives.

6 Discussion

6.1 The current grants outcomes and budget were set in 2011 and have been in place since April 2012. The process for specifying and awarding grants was reworked at that time and has been successful.

6.2 There is now a need to review the position ahead of the 2015-16 budget round, to ensure that future grant funding is in line with the council's required outcomes and budget expectations over the next few years.

6.3 In deciding the future position, the council will need to consider:

- a) The length of any future funding term
- b) The available indicative budget, taking into consideration the council's current budget position
- c) Which service outcomes can be achieved better through voluntary sector funding
- d) Whether to reduce the number of funding themes to avoid having several small grants split across a number of service areas
- e) Whether there are more appropriate themes to replace those currently funded.

6.4 The recommendation is to reconvene a member working party to consider the allocations process for voluntary sector grants and develop recommendations for approval by Committee. Any changes should be implemented in time to influence the 2015-16 grants budget round. Draft terms of reference are suggested at Appendix 1.

7 Legal powers

7.1 Section 111 of The Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

7.2 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives the Council the power (subject to certain exceptions which do not apply here) to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the Borough.

8 Financial and value for money implications

8.1 The annual grants commitment for 2014-15 is £223,162, including £22,106 representing a contribution through a countywide agreement to deal with high level interpersonal violence (domestic abuse) – this is also due for review during the 2014-15 financial year.

8.2 Any future grants will need to reflect the financial position of the council. It may be necessary to reduce the overall level of funds available. Providers will need to provide value for money and be able to demonstrate an evidenced contribution towards the council's aims and objectives.

9 Risk analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
Future priority outcomes not met under existing grant arrangements	Services needed by local people not provided Poor value for money	Medium	Review grant allocation criteria
Leading voluntary sector services cease if BCW funding is reduced.	Loss of service to local people Reputational damage to Council	Medium	Liaison with sector and other funding providers Equality impact assessment

10 Implications for resources

None. Work will be absorbed through the Community Support Service

11 Implications for stronger and safer communities

Supporting organisations through funding enables future planning and development in becoming self-sustaining. The services delivered through grant funding help to promote community cohesion, reduce crime and repeat victimisation build a stronger sense of community.

12 Implications for equalities

Equalities screenings will be carried out or full assessments may be necessary pending the recommendations of the member working group.

13 Author and contact officer

Gill Chapman, Principal Community Support Manager

14 Consultees

Tracey Cave, Service Accountant

15 Background papers

None.

Appendix 1: Draft Terms of Reference for the Grants Working Party

The purpose of the working party will be to:

- Review the range of grants currently provided under service level agreements
- Make recommendations to Resources Committee on the preferred range of services for the future, based on the council' s stated objectives
- Make recommendations to Resources Committee on the level of indicative grant funding allocated to the preferred range of services.
- Oversee the launch of the grants round in late 2014 and review the scoring process
- Receive feedback on scored applications and make recommendations to Resources Committee on the preferred allocations in time for the 2015-16 financial year.

The working party will make its initial recommendations in time to permit the drafting of the 2015-16 budget. In making these recommendations the working party will be mindful of the Council's imperative to reduce its revenue budget.

The life of the working party is expected to be July 2014 – March 2015

