

**Report of The Head of Finance**

**Voluntary and Community Sector Funding**

**1 Purpose of report**

To provide an update on the allocation of voluntary and community funding to date, and to propose further funding streams and uses of the remaining funding, as recommended by the Grants Working Party.

**2 Executive summary**

In June 2016 a report was presented to this committee on the allocation of voluntary and community funding for a period of 2 years from April 2016 to March 2018.

At that meeting the working party set up to review voluntary and community sector funding was asked to investigate a further funding stream to include heritage and local history based organisations. The work and recommendations of the working party are set out in this report on the use of the remaining funding for the year.

**3 Appendices**

None

**4 Proposed action:**

**The committee is invited to RESOLVE to:**

**4.1 Note voluntary and community sector allocations to date, and the current budgetary position;**

**4.2 Consider the recommendations made by the member working party in section 6.9 of the report, and the proposal in section 6.10 and advise officers how to proceed with these matters.**

**5 Background**

5.1 In January 2016, Resources Committee discussed the approach to voluntary and community sector funding for the two years up to March 2018. Members discussed the outcomes that would be required from this funding, considering both value for money and the procurement process. The outcomes and budgets from the previous process were refreshed, and a procurement exercise was undertaken, commissioning the agreed services for a further two years up to March 2018. The result of this commissioning process was shared with members at Resources Committee in June 2016

5.2 In addition, committee members had asked the working party, which had been

set up to review the grants process, for suggestions in relation to the unallocated balance of the budget; suggestions were put forward which were agreed by Resources Committee in June.

- 5.3 Taking these suggestions into account, a balance of £9,500 remained and the working party was asked by committee to look at introducing a 'heritage' strand within the voluntary and community sector funding for the period to March 2018.

## **6 Discussion**

- 6.1 The member working group met on 19 July 2016 and discussed the allocation of the funding at that point and the use of the balance of funding available. They reviewed the decisions made by Resources Committee at the June 2016 meeting and the subsequent actions taken by officers, and discussed the practicalities of a heritage based funding strand. A summary of the discussions and the recommendations of the group are detailed below.
- 6.2 The process for the Victoria Centre to apply for the unallocated budget for debt and employment advice of £2,212 had been completed and approved, with agreed outcomes.
- 6.3 The process for Goodwill Solutions Community Interest Company to apply for the unallocated budget for local hubs – providing community services in the Hemmingwell area - had been completed and approved, with agreed outcomes.
- 6.4 The small community grants budget had been increased by £3,000 to allow more organisations to apply within the current financial year.
- 6.5 Discussions had begun with Shire Community Services in regard to the Shopmobility service, working with the council to look at business plans and property considerations.
- 6.6 Initial exploration of an advocacy funding theme had taken place but more work was needed to devise a suitable specification and list of potential service providers who may be asked to bid for such a contract.
- 6.7 There are a number of organisations in the borough who deal with local history and artefacts and the working party were keen to instigate a process to allow as many different heritage and local history based organisations as possible to benefit from council support.
- 6.8 Heritage is included in the current criteria for small community grants. A grant of up to £500 would be enough to help organisations with the cost of insurance, information leaflets, wall plaques etc as well as cultural interpretations of history, such as oral history projects or dramatic interpretations. A number of small grants would potentially benefit a wider number of organisations than one larger grant.
- 6.9 The working party agreed to recommend to Resources Committee that:
- (a) £4,500 be transferred to the small community grants pot and prioritised for heritage based applications for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years. The scheme would be publicised amongst the relevant organisations to ensure maximum take-up.  
Any funds remaining would become part of the wider small community grants pot and would be available for applications from groups under the wider fund criteria. This means that the council would be able to accept bids for local initiatives supporting national awareness weeks such as hate crime week or domestic abuse week.

- (b) The remaining £4000 be left unallocated at the present time as a contingency fund for consideration should the council receive any urgent calls on its resources to support the sector.

6..10 Since the working group meeting, a request has been made to all boroughs and districts to extend the bridging loan arrangements for county refuges for women experiencing domestic violence, whilst the drawdown of national funding is awaited. The council's contribution is £3,000. It is suggested that the funds referred to in 6.9(b) are used for this purpose.

## 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 proposals outlined work within the total budgets allocated for 2016-17 and there are no additional pressures on the revenue budget. However, it does commit these funding levels up to April 2018, and this therefore reduces the flexibility the council has to vary its spending in these areas over that period.

## 9 Risk analysis

<b>Nature of risk</b>	<b>Consequences if realised</b>	<b>Likelihood of occurrence</b>	<b>Control measures</b>
Future priority outcomes not met under grant arrangements	Services needed by local people not provided  Poor value for money	Medium	Review funding methodology and 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
Level of funding becomes unaffordable but no flexibility to change prior to April 2018	Potential adverse revenue budget implications	Medium	A planned and controlled MTFP is in place

**10 Implications for resources**

This work will be achieved using existing resources of the council.

**11 Implications for stronger and safer communities**

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

**12 Implications for equalities**

All procurement will adhere to the council's equality duty. As part of the ongoing review equality impact assessments will be undertaken as necessary.

**13 Authors and contact officers**

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**14 Consultees**

Bridget Lawrence Head of Resources  
Julie Thomas Head of Planning and Local development  
John Campbell Chief Executive

**15 Background papers**

Reports to Resources February 2016 and June 2016  
Working Group notes  
Procurement Regulations