

Report to Grant Aid Review Task and Finish Panel

Report Reference: GAR-003-2014/15

Date of meeting: 31 March 2015



Subject: Review of Grant Aid Scheme for Voluntary and Community Organisations

Responsible Officer: Chris Overend (01992 564247)

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the information supplied in response to Members' requests at the last meeting be assessed with a view to identifying potential enhancements to the scheme.

Reason for Decision:

As Members noted at the previous meetings, the review is being carried out against the backdrop of a reduction of £11,517 in the Grant Aid Budget for 2015/16. This has reduced the overall budget to £83,453 in the next financial year, of which £43,453 is committed on three year agreements. In effect this leave £40,000 for consideration of applications for one-off major grants. Members will no doubt, therefore, wish to use the information presented to help identify key areas towards which the more limited budget should be directed.

Report:

1. At the inaugural meeting on 14 January 2105, Members of the Panel began the process of review and identified three aspects of the scheme they wished to have more information on as they felt these were key areas through which potential enhancements could be pinpointed. The aspects concerned were as follows:

- Ø The eligibility criteria for the current scheme;
- Ø Details of grants approved during the past five years; and
- Ø A list of the current three-year Service Level Agreements.

2. Information on the aspects referred to in 1 above, along with the 'Scorecard' system for determining applications and the relevant Council targets impacted by the Grant Aid Scheme, was duly considered at the last meeting. Having received the information, the Panel made a number of suggestions for enhancing the scheme, as set out in the minutes of the 2 March 2015 (Minute 11 refers) attached with the agenda for this meeting.

3. The Panel also agreed to give initial consideration to the criteria for the three-year service level agreements. A schedule setting out information on the groups in receipt of such agreements is attached. Members are reminded that the criteria for the award of Service Level Agreements are not dissimilar to that for a major grant. However, the money is towards core activity; such a group must have received at least one previous grant totaling £1,000 or more, be the main or an important provider of the service within the District, and be working in partnership with the Council (ideally having done so for a number of years).

4. Information on the current advertising and consultation arrangements for the Scheme

is attached. Members are asked to comment on the arrangements and to identify potential enhancements.

5. The Portfolio Holder and/or officers undertake follow-up visits to groups subsequent to the award of a grant. Limited resources mean that it is not possible to visit all such groups. However, over a period of time those in receipt of SLA's and a cross section of other groups are visited. This provides an opportunity to assess how successful an approved scheme has been and to discuss issues of mutual concern. The issues discussed will vary dependent on the group and the type of scheme for which grant aid approval has been given. However, the monitoring form attached gives an indication of the topics which might be covered. Again Members are asked for their comments on the existing arrangements and to identify potential enhancements.

Resource implications:

Budget provision

The Grant Aid Budget for 2015/16 has been set at £83,453. There are also separate budgets in the Voluntary and Community Sector for VAEF (£39,120), the CAB (£113,380) and Welfare Transport (£16,000).

Personnel

The Communities, Policies and Grants Officer and Assistant are responsible for administering the scheme. They do so in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Community Services and with the involvement of officers from Community, Arts and Sports Development, and Finance, where necessary and appropriate.

Land

N/A.

Appendices:

- Ø Groups in Receipt of Three Year Service Level Agreements;
- Ø Monitoring Major Grants and Three Year SLA forms; and
- Ø Areas of Advertising and Consultation Arrangements.