

# **The Vale of Glamorgan Council**

## **Cabinet Meeting: 31 October, 2016**

### **Report of the Leader**

## **Reshaping Services Programme - Grants to Community and Voluntary Organisations**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update for Cabinet on the position with regard to the Small Community Grants Scheme and Voluntary Action Scheme.
2. To outline options for the future operation of the schemes, in view of the ongoing Reshaping Services Programme and seek Cabinet support for a review of these schemes.

### **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet approves, as the basis for consultation and further development, that the Small Community Grants Scheme and Voluntary Action Scheme and associated budgets are replaced with a new Community Grants Scheme from 2017/18.
2. That Cabinet approves the proposals for the operation of the Voluntary Action Scheme and Small Community Grants Scheme for the remainder of 2016/17.
3. That, subject to recommendation one, this report be referred to the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee for that Committee to consider approaches to the operation of a Community Grants scheme.
4. That a further report be brought to Cabinet in due course for consideration.

### **Reasons for the Recommendations**

1. To provide a basis for developing proposals.
2. To enable these grant schemes to operate for the remainder of the financial year.
3. To support the development of a Community Grants Scheme by engaging with relevant organisations to elicit their views.
4. To enable informed consideration by Cabinet.

### **Background**

1. The Council's Reshaping Services Programme includes a project relating to "Effectiveness of Spend". This project was established to consider the way in which the Council's grant funding is approved, administered and spent in order to ensure

the maximum value is derived from this (and other sources of) funding and decisions are made in a consistent and informed way. Consideration is also being given to the way that grant funding can be coordinated with other sources in order to make best use of available funding within the context of decreasing Council finances.

2. There are synergies between this project and that of the Town & Community Councils and Voluntary Sector project, including promoting the use of the voluntary sector and other organisations in providing, operating and supporting services to Vale of Glamorgan residents, such as through Community Asset Transfers for which the Council adopted a new policy earlier in the year.
3. As part of this project, during 2015 Cabinet approved changes to a range of grants. This included a review in the provision of Christmas grants, including Christmas Community Action Self Help (CASH) grants and Christmas lunch grants, a review of the funding to Town and Community Councils through the CASH scheme and the establishment of a new fund in the 2015/16 Capital Programme for additional capital schemes for community facilities. A further review of the award criteria for CASH grants is required for the 2017/18 tranche of grants. A report will be brought to Cabinet in January 2017, in preparation for circulation to Town & Community Councils later in the financial year. Cabinet has also reviewed the funding levels for the Cardiff and Vale Citizens Advice Bureau for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18 and Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) for 2016-17 and 2017-18, resulting in savings for the Council in each of those years.
4. Alongside the work undertaken to set the various grant budgets over the last 12 months, other work and potential funding streams have been identified to support the development of community facilities. The annual report on the S106 legal agreements for 2015-16 indicated that 21 legal agreements were entered into between April 2015 and March 2016. A number of these included contributions that could enhance community facilities as well as improvements to green spaces and public open spaces, education facilities and sustainable development/infrastructure projects. This has included S106 agreements relating to sites at Wick, Barry and Rhoose. During the same period, as well as negotiating new agreements, funding was received for community benefits in Ystradowen, Llangan, Wenvoe and Rhoose. Finally, the same report provided information on the S106 account, giving information on a range of funding streams potentially available for community facilities and other associated community based schemes and green spaces, art and sustainable transport.
5. On 11 July 2016, Cabinet endorsed a proposal to expand the Creative Rural Communities model to all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan up to 2020 with the provision of two new Senior Regeneration Officers and a Regeneration Assistant. The aim is to develop capacity of communities across the entire Vale of Glamorgan in the way that has been achieved in the rural Vale of Glamorgan since 2004. The report made it clear that the project will support the Reshaping Services agenda and partnership working within community groups.

## **Relevant Issues and Options**

### **Small Community Grants Scheme**

6. Prior to 2015/16, local groups and voluntary organisations were invited to apply for funding under this scheme. In 2014/15 88 grants were awarded totalling £46,050 to organisations across the Council's then corporate priorities. The majority of grant awardees had been in receipt of the grant for a number of years and individual awards ranged from £150 to £3,200.

7. During 2015/16 the availability of funding was not advertised and only applications and enquiries received before June 2015 were progressed. As a result grants totalling £1,830 were awarded to 11 organisations who submitted bids that aligned with the Council's corporate priorities. A further £3,970 had been committed for 2015/16 in previous years as part of the scheme. Where alternative funding was available, organisations were signposted to those alternative sources of funding.
8. As the arrangements for this grant have been the subject of review during the 2016/17 year, no new grants operating within this scheme have been awarded. Very few enquiries have been received during the year. Where enquiries have been received, applicants have been signposted to alternative sources of funding where possible.

### **Voluntary Action Scheme Grants**

9. The Voluntary Action Scheme has been in place for a number of years with the arrangements and priorities for funding being proposed by the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee and agreed by Cabinet.
10. The scheme received 14 applications in 2014/15 and funding was awarded to three schemes for three years. These schemes were for Crossroads in the Vale (Social Inclusion groups for those with dementia £54k between 2014/15 and 2016/17), Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern ("Independent living project" £12k between 2014/15 and 2016/17) and Vale Centre for Voluntary Services (now Glamorgan Voluntary Services), Third Sector Consortia Development £63k between 2014/15 and 2016/17).
11. As projects funded under this scheme could receive funding for between 1 and 3 years and some organisations have received agreement to slip funding forward due to delays in the delivery of the project, it is projected that £45,000 will be spent during 2016/17.

### **Future Delivery of a Community Grants Scheme**

12. It is recognised that the Council needs to consider options for the delivery of a new Community grants scheme and would benefit from the input of external partners in this work. Potential future operating models could take a number of different formats. These could include working with a third sector grant body to assist with match funding and co-ordination of grant funding, for example, the Waterloo Foundation. Approaching Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) to assist with and input into the grant funding assessment process is also a potential option as the organisation already plays an active role in supporting the local Voluntary Sector and signposting organisations to potential sources of funding. The Chief Executive of GVS is a member of the Reshaping Services programme board and is therefore aware of the challenges the Council is seeking to address and contributes to the Reshaping Services Town & Community Councils and Voluntary Sector project team. Finally, the Council could continue to administer the scheme internally ensuring applications are routinely reviewed to have sight of potential links with other sources of funding that may be available, such as Section 106 contributions and other grants. Such an approach could be informed by the work of the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee.
13. Options for how the scheme could operate will need to be evaluated against their ability to meet the criteria for the Reshaping Services effectiveness of spend project. This criteria is:  
  
To ensure any schemes funded from the Council's grant allocations contribute to the Council's priorities, as set out in the Corporate Plan;

To ensure the maximum value is derived from this (and other sources of) funding and that decisions are made in a consistent and informed way (i.e. the way the Council's grant funding is approved, administered and spent);

To ensure that grant funding can be coordinated with other sources of funding in order to make best use of available funding within the context of decreasing Council finances.

To leverage alternative sources of supplementary funding, including how the third sector and Council departments can work in partnership.

14. It is proposed that options be developed for the operation of the Community Grants Scheme through consultation and further research. Further research will be undertaken by Officers to inform the development of the options above for how a Community Grants scheme could operate, including eligibility, assessment and administration processes.
15. It is proposed that this report and the work undertaken by Officers described above be referred to the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee for that Committee to consider specifically how any future Community grants scheme could work in order to gain the input of representatives of the third sector. The Committee would be requested to consider the ability of the various options described (and any others they identify) to meet the criteria of the review. As the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled following Cabinet's forthcoming consideration of draft budget proposals for 2017/18 onwards, it is proposed that the draft proposed level of grant funding that will be available for such a scheme would also be provided to the Committee to inform discussions. Consideration of the proposals will be required in the context of the work currently being undertaken to review the Voluntary Sector Compact.
16. Once this research, consultation and consideration has been undertaken, a further report will be brought to Cabinet. This report will include recommendations for the future organisation of the Community Grants scheme with a view to this operating during the 2017/18 financial year. This will include the setting of criteria to ensure that any applications are assessed having regard to the Council's Corporate Priorities and the Reshaping Services agenda.

## **Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)**

### **2016/17 Corporate Grant Allocations**

17. In 2015/16, there was an underspend against corporate grants due to the way in which the schemes operated as outlined above. In 2016/17 this was formalised with savings of £210k from the Corporate Grants budget being required. Financial provision has therefore been made within the corporate policy revenue budget 2016/17 for grants totalling £525k. Savings of £142k have been identified to date (£10k from Christmas Grants, £125k from Other Corporate Grants £125k and £7k from inflation savings). There is a balance of £68k to be identified within the current year and this will be met from continued forecast underspend on these grants.
18. An analysis of the 2016/17 grant budgets is shown below:

Grant	2016/17
	£
Voluntary Action Scheme	173,000
Small Community Grants Scheme	50,000
Menter Bro Morgannwg	20,000

Urdd Gobaith Cymru	10,000
Christmas Grants	12,000
Other Corporate Grants	328,280
Savings to be Identified	-68,000
Total	525,280
Budget	525,280

19. As part of the development of the Council's revenue budget proposals for 2017/18, consideration of an affordable level of corporate grant funding will be given in light of the Reshaping Services programme and available funding.

### **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

20. The Council's grant funding allocations are made in line with Council priorities which have been informed by and contribute to the Council's priorities contained in the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan sets out how the Council will demonstrate its contribution to the Well-being of Future Generations Act, specifically the well-being goals. In doing so, the Council is required to consider the sustainable development principle which states that public service organisations must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### **Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)**

21. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

22. The funding of the voluntary sector should assist in increasing social inclusion and reducing crime.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)**

23. The core eligibility criteria provided to all applicants provides that all organisations seeking funding must actively promote equal opportunities in their operations and service delivery.

### **Corporate/Service Objectives**

24. Grant funding provided by the Council is required to support the delivery of all Council priorities and objectives.

### **Policy Framework and Budget**

25. The proposals within this report are matters for Executive decision.

### **Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)**

26. It is proposed that engagement of the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee be sought in the development of future proposals for the operation of a community grants scheme.

### **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

27. Corporate Performance and Resources

**Background Papers**

**Contact Officer**

Principal Accountant, Resources

**Officers Consulted**

Operational Manager Accountancy

**Responsible Officer:**

Managing Director