

Community Revenue Grant Review

Summary

To consider amendments to the existing Council Revenue Grant scheme to be implemented from 1st April 2020.

Portfolio: Support & Safeguarding

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 30 July 2019

Wards Affected: All

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) a revised Revenue Grant Scheme, as set out in paragraph 4.1.3 of this report, be agreed; and
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Executive Head of Transformation and Executive Head of Business in consultation with the Support & Safeguarding Portfolio Holder to agree terms of the new policy.

1. Key Issues

- 1.1 Grant support to voluntary organisations is a discretionary function of the Council and the Executive therefore has the option to vary the level of support to organisations, or to withdraw funding for some or all of the grants.
- 1.2 The Council has actively worked in partnership with the voluntary sector for many years to either undertake work on our behalf or awards revenue grants in areas that meet the changing needs, gaps and trends within Surrey Heath. The Council values this work undertaken and delivered by the voluntary sector enormously.
- 1.3 At present, nine organisations are invited to apply each year to the revenue grants fund using a standardised application form which asks applicants to demonstrate how they benefit the borough of Surrey Heath and how grant funding will be used. Applicants are also asked to set targets which they become accountable for.
- 1.4 The grants over the past 16 years have generally supported the same organisations, with two notable changes being: 2014 funding ceased to the Butts, and in 2016 the Council started funding Camberley and District Job Club.

- 1.5 The scheme is not open to new applications, and all grants are monitored by Service Level Agreements, which are negotiated annually, with Council payments generally made quarterly following the submission of an update report.
- 1.6 The existing awards are addressed equally with a single classification, but our working relationships are in fact broader. Organisations funded by the revenue grant scheme can generally be broken down into two types:
- a) Those who independently provide services that meet local priorities, needs and gaps (E.g. Camberley Job Club, Surrey Heath Age Concern)
 - b) Those who undertake work on the Council's behalf where there are greater benefits achieved through economy of scale in comparison to the Council working alone (e.g. Basingstoke Canal Authority, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership).
- 1.7 Organisations in the latter bracket have expressed frustration that they are required to apply for grants on an annual basis, as they consider the work they perform to be part of long standing partnership agreements.

2. Resource Implications

- 2.1 The annual budget for both the Community and Leisure Revenue Grants is £165,000 in cash, with in-kind benefits valued at a minimum of £48,600.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The Executive meeting on the 22nd January, whilst awarding the revenue grant awards for the year 2019/20, asked that the External Partnership Select Committee review the existing Revenue Grant Scheme and this was considered on the 10th June with the following recommendations being made:
- Ring fence revenue grant funding for Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership and Basingstoke Canal Authority for up to a three year period and;
 - Open the remaining funding to organisations that can deliver services that meet local priorities and needs.
- 3.2 It was noted service level agreements in place with partnership organisations included a clause stipulating that the Council must give at least 6 months' notice of a change in funding; although all organisations, which were currently in receipt of grants, had been made aware that a review of the Revenue Grant scheme was taking place. This timescale will ensure that the Council complies with the existing compact arrangements and enable implementation from the 1st April 2020.

- 3.3 The current grant application process has not been reviewed for a number of years and does not recognise the difference between the two types of organisations funded listed in section 3 above.

4. Options

- 4.1 The Executive has the following options

4.1.1 Option A - No change, retain the existing application process

4.1.2 Option B - Totally open scheme, using the Council Annual Plan as a basis for organisations to deliver and enable the Council to be responsive to changing local needs and priorities. However this will not give any security of funding to organisations which could affect their delivery (always having one eye on new funding opportunities rather than focussing on delivering as efficiently as possible) as it gives no funding security to organisations like Citizens Advice Surrey Heath.

4.1.3 Option C - Ring fence funding for certain organisations that perform functions on the Councils behalf, including Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership and Basingstoke Canal Authority, and consider extending this for up to a three year period. Open the remaining funding to organisations that can deliver services that can meet our changing local priorities such as: homelessness, social prescribing for older people etc.

- 4.2 It is suggested that Option C is approved by the Executive, with authority delegated to the Support and Safeguarding Portfolio Holder and Executive Head/s Transformation and Business to agree terms of the new policy based upon the terms of reference as detailed in the background papers.

5. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

- 5.1 Any grants made under a new scheme will reflect the Council's Corporate Objectives and Key Priorities.

6. Equalities Impact

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken once the Policy has been drafted.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The existing recipients of Revenue Grants have been made aware of the proposals.

7.2 The item was also reviewed by the External Partnerships Select Committee in June 2019.

Annexes	Annex A – Draft Terms of Reference
Background Papers	Executive meeting - 22 January 2019 External Partnerships Select Committee meeting – 11 June 2019
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1. Terms of reference:

To consider a new policy to include different categories

- A: Grant funding/or new community organisations /seeking seed funding
- B: Delivering Services on behalf of the Council

Look at offering a longer-term option than 1 year for organisations that deliver services on behalf of the Council.

Introduce a clear points based system, which looks at fulfilling the local needs and priorities outlined in the Councils Annual Plan, with all grant funded groups being:

Fully compliant i.e. safeguarding, public liability, has all statutory policies,

- Organisational stability
- Fundraising policies and successes
- Marketing and publicity
- Benefits to the community
- Partnership Working
- Future planning (how sustainable are they as an organisation)
- How do they value the services that the organisation provides.
- Look at options around how any matched funding can be used to enable the organisation to deliver service, consider introducing a maximum number of years that funding will be available i.e. grant funded up to 3 years.
- Look at capturing information on all funds that are provided to the not for profit sector, that includes Community Safety Board, and High Sheriff award, amongst others that gives elected members some improved context around the overall level of funding being given.
- Look at providing sign posting to crowd funding advice and guidance to those who receive funding and or encourage joining the Surrey Heath Community Lottery.