

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 JANUARY 2013
EXECUTIVE – 5 FEBRUARY 2013

Title:

**WAVERLEY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP – APPLICATIONS FOR REVENUE
FUNDING 2013/14**

**[Portfolio Holders: Cllrs Mike Band and Brian Adams]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

The purpose of this report is to ask the Executive to consider the applications to the Waverley Community Partnership for revenue funding in 2013/14, taking into account the observations made by the Community O&S Committee.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The Waverley Community Partnership awards funding towards the running costs of organisations that provide high priority services for the benefit of Waverley residents, in partnership with the Council. The services that the partner organisations deliver cut across all corporate objectives and could fall in any of the five Corporate Priorities. In addition the Council made a specific commitment in the Corporate Plan to work with voluntary groups to meet the needs of residents. Waverley's contribution to the Waverley Voluntary Grants Panel also helps support organisations specifically in the well-being and social welfare area.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The organisations that Waverley supports under the Waverley Community Partnership provide access to key services in the Borough which benefit a wide range of users including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Applicants to the scheme are required, where applicable, to have appropriate and up-to-date policies including equality and diversity, child protection, etc. Waverley's Partnership Agreements with funded organisations have specific clauses promoting equality and diversity issues.

Financial implications:

At its meeting on 2 October 2012, the Executive agreed to open the 2013/14 funding round of the Waverley Community Partnership to coincide with the budget-setting process. The Executive agreed the overall grants pot would be reduced by 10%, as a precaution, because of uncertainty around the Council's final government grant settlement. All existing partner organisations were advised to estimate a grant reduction of up to 10% from the Council as they do their financial planning for 2013/14. Total funding for the current year, 2012/13, is £350,100 and a 10% reduction would mean the overall budget for 2013/14 would be £315,090.

When considering applications, the Grants Moderation Panel's starting point was a target saving of 10% on the funding awarded for 2012/13. The panel were, however, mindful of the potential impact any cut would have on our voluntary organisations

and that many are providing vital services to more vulnerable members of the community. The Moderation Panel made its recommendations on levels of funding and, in recognition of the value and commitment to those voluntary organisations that help to deliver services on the Council's behalf, reached an initial position which amounted to a 6% saving overall, with grants totalling £328,819.

A significant reduction in the Council's grant from Government has now been confirmed in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. Through prudent and careful analysis of Waverley's latest budget position, Members feel it important to prioritise the vital services that partner organisations provide. A contingency of £47,000 was agreed by the Executive for the 2012/13 funding round and a balance of £24,130 remains unspent. It is proposed that these funds are carried over to 2013/14 and used to boost the grants pot for 2013/14 to enable the overall grant reduction to be limited to 6%. This clearly demonstrates the value and commitment to those voluntary organisations that help to deliver services on the Council's behalf and achieves the grants panel's proposed recommendations on levels of funding.

Details of the grant awards to each organisation for 2013/14 will be reported to the Executive at its 5 February 2013 meeting, following detailed consideration by the O&S Committee. Final grants will be approved by full Council on 19 February 2013.

In addition, at its meeting on 2 October 2012, for budget planning purposes, the Executive agreed that the total amount of money that Waverley contributes to the Waverley Voluntary Grants Panel (WVGP) for 2013/14 should be reduced by 10%, from £42,770 to £38,493. However, since NHS Surrey withdrew from the Panel, previously funding approximately 60% of the overall pot, there is huge financial pressure on the scheme. Surrey County Council has agreed to maintain its contribution at the same level as last year. It is therefore proposed that unspent funds from the 2012/13 contingency be allocated to the pot to maintain the Council's contribution. Waverley's budget also includes an annual revenue contribution of £4,000 to help facilitate the approved allocation of grants from the WVGP.

Summary of funding proposed

Waverley Community Partnership	
Budget at target 10% reduction	£315,090
Top up from contingency	<u>£13,729</u>
Total proposed grants for 2013/14	<u>£328,819</u>
Waverley Voluntary Grants Panel	
Budget at target 10% reduction	£38,493
Top up from contingency	<u>£4,277</u>
Total proposed contribution for 2013/14	<u>£42,770</u>
Ring-fenced unspent balance of contingency	£6,124

In addition to the above grant schemes, the Council financially supports a number of other voluntary sector organisations to deliver high priority services. In 2012/13, as part of a nominated pilot project, 3 organisations signed up to 3 year Service Level Agreements from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015. The total annual funding to these

organisations is currently £377,430. Further information on the progress of the pilot scheme is on the Agenda for this meeting. WRVS is also funded through a Service Level Agreement, renewed on an annual basis, in partnership with Surrey County Council. Waverley's contribution of £30,000 is matched by the County Council to provide a service to residents in the Borough.

The Council's overall budget for grants to the voluntary sector is £744,000, showing the Council's continued commitment to its partnerships with organisations. This budget has been maintained at the same level as the current year, despite a significant reduction in the Council's Government grant. Whilst there are some reductions in the proposed Community Partnership Grants (6% overall) keeping the overall budget at the same level has enabled an emergency funding provision of £45k to be created to provide unexpected or urgent support to current and new partner organisations in the year.

Legal Implications

Having a robust grant scheme that is reviewed annually ensures that the Council is not open to dispute under the Surrey Compact Funding Code 2009.

Background

1. The principal aim of the Waverley Community Partnership is to 'provide financial support for voluntary and charitable organisations that deliver high priority service for the benefit of Waverley residents in partnership with the Council'.

Applications

2. A total of 31 applications to the Waverley Community Partnership have been received, with 5 from new applicants. The total level of funding requested by the organisations for 2013/14 was £429,532 and Annexe 1 details all of the applications received, which far exceeded the target budget of £315,090.

The Assessment Process

3. Each application has been reviewed by the relevant 'link officer' within each service area. In addition, a financial assessment of each organisation's annual accounts has been undertaken to identify any changes/concerns in the financial position of partner organisations. Where appropriate, Member Representatives for organisations were invited to comment in general on their work. Members are encouraged to read the application documentation from each organisation and the summary information that was provided to the grants moderation panel: Members should contact the Community Partnerships Officer for copies of the documents. Should Members require further information on each organisation they are advised to contact the appropriate link officer.
4. A grants panel, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Community Services, made recommendations on funding levels. The Chairman was supported by the Portfolio Holder for Older Residents, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Culture and officers. The panel made proposals on levels of funding ahead of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consideration.

5. Annexe 1 shows notes on the reasons for the proposed grant levels for some organisations where this is considered to be particularly relevant. Information on other discretionary financial support that the Council provided to partner organisations in 2011/12 is detailed in Annexe 2.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Grants Sub-Committee

6. A Sub-Committee was established in November 2011 to review the application documentation and scrutinise the grants moderation panel's initial allocations. At its meeting on 19 November 2012 the Community O&S agreed to establish the Sub-Committee again this year to consider the initial allocations in more detail before bringing observations back to this Committee at its next meeting in January 2013. The Sub-Committee met on 4 January and the minutes of the meeting are attached at Annexe 3.

Conclusion

7. The Council has demonstrated its full commitment to partners who deliver valuable services on the Council's behalf, with an understanding of the challenging times these organisations are facing through minimising the impact to the Waverley Community Partnership grants pot.
8. The final approval on funding levels will not be made until the Council meeting on 19 February 2013, four months after organisations submitted their applications. To assist organisations with their financial planning and in the spirit of the Surrey Compact Funding Code 2009, a letter was sent to all applicants informing them of their initial grant allocations in mid-January. The letter made it clear to organisations that the proposed allocations are subject to Member scrutiny and final approval by the Council on 19 February 2013.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive

1. considers the applications for Waverley Community Partnership Funding in 2013/14 having regard to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Sub-Committee; and
2. recommends grant levels for each organisation, as detailed in Annexe 1 to the report, to the Council for approval.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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