

ITEM 9 – APPENDIX D

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE – 1ST OCTOBER 2013

Title:

WAVERLEY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND WAVERLEY VOLUNTARY GRANTS PARTNERSHIP 2014/15 FUNDING ROUND

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Stefan Reynolds]
[Wards Affected:All]**

Summary and purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek the Executive's approval to continue to support the Waverley Community Partnership scheme and the Waverley Voluntary Grants Partnership in 2014/15.

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

The Waverley Community Partnership (WCP) awards funds to 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 5 priority areas. Waverley's contribution to the Waverley Voluntary Grants Partnership (WVGP) also helps support organisations specifically in the well-being and social welfare area.

Financial Implications:

The annual budget provision for funding to the voluntary sector in 2013/14 was £774,000. Funding awarded was as follows:

Number of organisations supported	Total funding awarded (£)	Scheme
25	328,819	Waverley Community Partnership
21	42,770	Waverley Voluntary Grants Partnership
3	100,000 195,040 32,490	SLA pilot scheme organisations Waverley Hoppa Community Transport Citizens Advice Waverley Farnham Maltings Outreach Service (excludes Museum service)
	45,000	Emergency Funding Provision
1	30,000	WRVS Meals on Wheels
Total funding	774,119	

This is a cost-effective way of helping to deliver the Council's Corporate Objectives. Decisions on funding for 2014/15 will be made as part of the Budget process to be concluded in February 2014.

The Mid-Year Budget Review report also on this agenda alerts Members to a significant budget shortfall in the medium term. All budgets will be scrutinised throughout the Star Chamber process leading up to the final budget setting Council meeting in February 2014. In the light of this, all existing supported organisations have been written to alerting them to the potential pressure on Waverley's budget. Due to these pressures, it is the intention for officers to review the emergency provision that is set aside in each year's funding allocation to ensure that it is at the appropriate level.

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.

Introduction

1. The principal aim of the Waverley Community Partnership (WCP) is to provide financial support for voluntary and charitable organisations that deliver high priority services for the benefit of Waverley residents in partnership with the Council.
2. The scheme is reviewed annually by the Portfolio Holder for Grants, supported by officers, to ensure that the grant criteria and assessment process continue to meet the priorities of the Council and is fair and transparent. For the next funding round, no major changes have been proposed.
3. The organisations receiving grants from the Waverley Community Partnership are detailed in Annexe 1.
4. The Council is hugely supportive of the voluntary organisations in the borough and despite anticipating needing to reduce spending on grants in 2013/14, it was pleased to freeze the overall budget at the previous year's level. Within this, support for organisations varied, and 2 organisations were brought into the scheme. This also allowed for an emergency funding provision of £45,000 to be created for unexpected or urgent requests for support to current and new partner organisations during the year. £16,575 of the Emergency Funding Provision has been allocated to 2 organisations to date, with other potential applications anticipated.
5. The proposed application timetable for the scheme will enable the Waverley Community Partnership applications to be considered as part of the budget process.

Existing funding levels and new organisations

6. In recent years, with limited resources and the Council's desire not to cut funding levels to existing organisations, there has been limited scope to introduce funding for new organisations. Despite this, in 2013/14 2 new organisations were awarded funding. 3 organisations were also taken out of the scheme in 2012/13 and are now funded through direct budgets. A robust assessment process may create an opportunity to fund new organisations in 2014/15 that provide priority services to the community.
7. The financial status, including the extent of external funding support, efficiency savings, and business plans of applicants will be closely examined to ensure the Council is satisfied with the applicants' efficient, prudent and effective service delivery.

Proposed timetable for 2014/15

8. It is proposed that organisations are invited to apply for revenue funding for the financial year 2013/14 with a closing date for applications of Thursday 14 November 2013. The key dates are detailed below:

2 October 2013	2014/15 application round opens
14 November 2013	Application deadline
15 November 2013 to early December 2013	Processing and assessment of applications
27 January 2014	Community O&S Committee to comment on proposed grants
4 February 2014	Executive
18 February 2014	Council
19 February 2014	Grant award letters sent to applicants

Application process and criteria

9. The existing process was reviewed against the principles of the Surrey Compact, to which the Council is committed. The Compact encourages funders to make it easier for voluntary organisations to seek funding, to improve the process for funding and evaluation is appropriate and proportionate.
10. It is suggested that the eligibility criteria for organisations wishing to be considered for funding be retained. However, more emphasis will be placed on applicant's ability to meet the Council's corporate priorities and the setting and monitoring of specific outcomes with a successful applicant will reflect this.
11. Officers will continue to reject applications which clearly do not meet the eligibility criteria, thereby providing organisations with clarity at an early stage.
12. Where an organisation has a nominated Member representative they will be invited to comment in general on the work of the organisation.

Assessment process

13. Applications will be assessed within the overall budget of the scheme by a grants panel. When making a judgement on grant levels the panel will take into account a number of factors including: summary information provided by officers, information from the organisation's application form, information from the applicant's accounts, the extent to which Waverley's corporate objectives will be met, the extent to which Partnership Agreement objectives have been met, general performance and other sources of funding. How the partner organisations deliver their promises and provide services will also be assessed to ensure they continue to provide high standard, value for money services from the funds that the Council invests.
14. Link officers will provide an initial assessment of the application. The financial position of organisations will be scrutinised by officers. Summary information on each application will be provided to a grants panel chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Grants, supported by 2 Councillors and officers from the Community Services team. The grants panel will meet before their suggested initial allocations are considered by a Community Overview and Scrutiny Grants Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee's observations will be passed to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January. The Executive will consider the allocations and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommend grant levels for each organisation to Council in February 2014.

Partnership Agreements

15. Once a revenue grant is approved and a grant offer made, each organisation and the relevant Waverley service officer, who forms the key link officer during the funding period, prepare a Partnership Agreement. The Partnership Agreement details the key outcomes and outputs for the year. For 2014/15 it is proposed that the performance of organisations should be more closely monitored as, with the Council's reducing budgets, this information will help inform future decisions on Waverley's financial support for organisations and ensure the key outcomes are being delivered.

Voluntary Grants Partnership

16. The WVGP is open to voluntary and community organisations providing well-being or social welfare projects in Waverley. A similar partnership arrangement operates for Guildford, but these are the only examples of this type of funding arrangement in Surrey.
17. Now that NHS Surrey is not part of the scheme, the panel, with the support of Voluntary Action South West Surrey, is negotiating with the new Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to encourage them to become a partner of the scheme and contribute to the funding pot. The CCGs have been invited to all meetings with partners around the scheme so they can see it in operation. The CCGs have not yet made a decision on whether to join the scheme.

18. Surrey County Council Adult Services are reviewing all grant schemes in the coming year, however, they have indicated that there will be no changes for 2014/15 and their contribution to the pot will be maintained at last year's level. It is proposed that Waverley's revenue contribution towards the administration of the WVGP should remain the same as last year. The number of applications to the scheme remains high with 41 applications in 2013/14 requesting a total of £267,948. 21 organisations were awarded grants totalling £90,611.

Conclusion

19. The Waverley Community Partnership continues to provide vital revenue funding to voluntary and community organisations which is often difficult to secure from funders who tend to prefer to support one-off projects. The Council places great value on the work of the organisations that it supports through its grant schemes. Organisations and volunteers continue to work hard to deliver outcomes for the community in line with Waverley's corporate priorities. The scheme is highly regarded by organisations and requests for funding exceed the grants budget each year. Many of the funded organisations provide vital services to the most vulnerable members of the community. Waverley's grant also levers in funding through the work of its partner organisations and the other grants that they secure, representing good value for money.

Recommendation

That the Executive approves:

1. The opening of the 2014/15 funding round; and
2. The overall funding process as detailed within the report.

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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