

# **AGENDA ITEM 8 – APPENDIX C**

## **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY O&S – 27 JANUARY 2014**

**EXECUTIVE – 4 FEBRUARY 2014**

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### **Title:**

#### **WAVERLEY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR REVENUE FUNDING 2014/15**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Carole King]**

**[Wards Affected: All]**

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### **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 2014/15, taking into account the observations made by the Community O&S Committee from its meeting on 27 January (to follow).

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### **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 5 priority areas. 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.

### **Financial Implications:**

At its meeting on 1 October 2013, the Executive agreed to open the 2014/15 funding round of the Waverley Community Partnership to coincide with the budget-setting process. In the summer all existing partner organisations were advised how the grants pot sits within the Council's overall budget pressures and to take extra care in preparing their financial plans for 2014/15. They were asked to consider alternative scenarios, including one with a reduction in grant funding. In the current year, 2013/14, the Council maintained its overall financial package for the voluntary sector and the total funding for the Waverley Community Partnership was £328,819.

The Council will receive a significant reduction in its grant from the Government for 2014/15. However, Members recognise the vital services delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector and mindful of the potential impact any cut would have on our voluntary organisations, many of which are providing vital services to more vulnerable members of the community, it is currently proposed in the draft budget 2014/15 to maintain the overall grants budget at the same level as the current year. The Grants Moderation Panel made its recommendations within the overall budget,

£328,819, although individual awards varied. When reaching its decisions, the panel also recommended bringing four 'new' organisations into the scheme whilst continuing to support all existing organisations. This clearly demonstrates the Council's continued commitment to the voluntary sector despite having to make its own budget reductions.

Details of the grant awards to each organisation for 2014/15 are reported to the Executive having been considered in detail by the O&S Committee. Final grants will be approved by full Council on 18 February 2014.

In addition, it is proposed that the total amount of money that Waverley contributes to the Waverley Voluntary Grants Panel (WVGP) for 2014/15 should not be reduced and be maintained at the same level as the current year, 2013/14, at £42,770. Surrey County Council has also agreed to maintain its contribution at the same level as the current year. Waverley's budget also includes an annual revenue contribution of £4,000 to help facilitate the approved allocation of grants from the WVGP.

In the current year, 2013/14, the Council established an emergency funding provision for unexpected or urgent requests for support to current and new partner organisations during the year. To date three organisations have been awarded funding, with four other applications pending. At present a balance of £28,965 will potentially remain unspent at the end of the year and it is proposed to carry over any unspent funds to next year, 2014/15 to maintain an emergency funding provision. This fund would again support any unexpected or urgent requests for support throughout the year. The grants panel have also recommended that some organisations could potentially receive further funding throughout the year and this provision would be used for that purpose.

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 three organisations signed up to three year Service Level Agreements from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015. The total annual funding to these organisations is currently £377,430, with Citizens Advice Waverley receiving £195,040, Farnham Maltings receiving £32,490 for the outreach service and £49,900 for the management of Farnham Museum and Waverley Hoppa Community Transport receiving £100,000. The RVS is also funded through a Service Level Agreement for the meals on wheels service, 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 financial package to the voluntary sector is, therefore, in excess of £750,000, showing the Council's continued commitment to its partnerships with voluntary organisations.

### **Legal Implications:**

Having a robust grant scheme that is reviewed annually ensures that the Council is not open to challenge under the Surrey Compact Funding Code 2009, which is consistent with funding bodies' duty to achieve value for money, principles in accounting and European Union procurement law.

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## **Introduction**

1. The principal aim of the Waverley Community Partnership 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.

## **Applications**

2. A total of 29 applications to the Waverley Community Partnership have been received, with six from new applicants. The total level of funding requested by the organisations for 2014/15 was £465,650 and Annexe 1 details all the applications received, which far exceeds the target budget of £328,819.

## **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 Partnerships, made recommendations on funding levels. The Chairman was supported by the Deputy Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Culture and officers from Finance and Communities. 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 provides to partner organisations is detailed in Annexe 2.

## **Community Overview and Scrutiny Grants Sub-Committee**

6. A Sub-Committee was established in November 2011 to review application documentation and scrutinise the grants moderation panel's initial allocations. At its meeting on 18 November 2013 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 19 December 2013 and the minutes of the meeting are attached at Annexe 3.

## **Service Level Agreements**

7. Following the work of a Member Special Interest Group (SIG) in 2011, the Executive agreed to invite three organisations to negotiate SLAs for 2012-15 as a pilot scheme for this new way of working. The organisations signed SLAs in April 2012 and regular monitoring meetings are held. At its meeting on 4 October 2011 the Executive asked for the success of the pilot SLAs to be monitored and their impact reviewed before rolling out the approach to other funded organisations.
8. Officers have concluded that the SLA pilot is a success and the process is working well. Outcomes have been monitored and reported to Committee. Following discussions with the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships other organisations have been identified as being suitable to be added to the organisations for which an SLA would be more appropriate. Whilst it is proposed that the organisations would continue to receive funding from the Waverley Community Partnership for 2014/15, negotiations to agree the content of the SLA will need to take place over the coming year so that three year Agreements from 2015-2018 can be in place for 1 April 2015. Proposals on the way forward will be reported to the Executive as part of an SLA Report in the Spring 2014.

## **Conclusion**

9. 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 maintaining the Waverley Community Partnership grants pot.
10. The final approval on funding levels will not be made until full Council in February 2014, four months after organisations have 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 full Council on 18 February 2014.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. considers the applications for Waverley Community Partnership funding in 2014/15 having regard to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Sub-Committee;
2. recommends grant levels for each organisation, as detailed in Annexe 1 to the report, to the Council for approval; and
3. recommends the remaining balance of the 2013/14 Emergency Funding Provision is carried over to 2014/15 to support any unexpected or urgent requests for support throughout the year and some of the recommendations made by the Grants Panel.

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## 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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