

AGENDA ITEM 7: APPENDIX C

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 30/09/2014

Title:

WAVERLEY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP 2015/16 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.

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.

Financial Implications:

The annual budget provision for funding to the voluntary sector in 2014/15 was £750,600. Funding awarded was as follows:

Number of organisations supported	Total funding awarded (£)	Scheme
27	328,819	Waverley Community Partnership
24	42,770	Waverley Voluntary Grants Partnership
3	100,000	SLA pilot scheme organisations
	195,040	Waverley Hoppa Community Transport
	32,490	Citizens Advice Waverley
		Farnham Maltings Outreach Service
	21,481	Emergency Funding Provision balance
1	30,000	WRVS Meals on Wheels
Total funding	750,600	

This is a cost-effective way of helping to deliver the Council's Corporate Objectives. Decisions on funding for 2015/16 will be made as part of the Budget process to be concluded in February 2015.

The Council has worked hard to maintain spending on grants over the past three years despite facing major reductions in the Council's government grant. It remains hugely supportive of the work and services delivered by funded voluntary sector partners. Whilst 2015/16 is expected to be another year of major reductions in

government grants, the Council will continue to look to protect funding to the voluntary sector if at all possible. Consequently, the overall budget for grants is not yet known and should be available after the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 3rd December 2014. Individual budgets will be scrutinised through the Star Chamber process and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees leading up to the final budget setting Council meeting in February 2015.

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.
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 is pleased to have maintained the overall budget at the same level since 2012/13, despite having to make significant savings on other services. Within this period, support for organisations varied, and 4 new organisations were brought into the scheme. An emergency funding provision of £45,000 was created in 2013/14 for urgent requests for support to current and new partner organisations during the year. In 2013/14 urgent grants totalling £23,519 were awarded, leaving a balance of £21,481 for 2014/15. One grant has been awarded this year totalling £2,430.
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 2014/15 4 new organisations were awarded funding. A robust assessment process may create an opportunity to fund new organisations in 2015/16 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.

Service Level Agreements

8. In 2012, three voluntary sector organisations signed three year Service Level Agreements, as a pilot for this new way of working. The pilot is considered a success by both the Council and the organisations and, as a result, the relevant Portfolio Holders and officers have begun discussions with all three organisations to continue the SLA process beyond March 2015 for a further three years. In addition, four more organisations have been identified as being well placed to make the transition for this new way of working. Discussions have begun with Cranleigh Arts Centre, The Clockhouse, The Orchard Club, Farncombe Day Centre with the intention of funding them through three year SLAs starting in March 2015.
9. If the SLA approach is approved, the funding for the four new organisations will need to be top sliced from the 2015/16 grants pot and levels of funding will be considered as part of the Council's budget setting process. A report outlining the SLAs and levels of funding will be approved at full Council in February 2015.

Proposed timetable for 2015/16

10. It is proposed that organisations are invited to apply for revenue funding for the financial year 2015/16 with a closing date for applications of Thursday 13 November 2014. The key dates are detailed below:

8 October 2014	2015/16 application round opens
13 November 2014	Application deadline
14 November 2014 to early December 2014	Processing and assessment of applications
27 January 2015	Community O&S Committee to comment on proposed grants
3 February 2015	Executive
17 February 2015	Council
18 February 2015	Grant award letters sent to applicants

Application process and criteria

11. 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.
12. Following an evaluation of the 2014/15 funding round, the eligibility criteria for organisations wishing to be considered for funding has been strengthened. It is proposed that organisations must show how their services meet one or more of five outcomes which reflect the needs of the community and priorities of the

Council in supporting residents. The decision-making process has also been made clearer. A copy of the Application Guidance is attached at Annexe 2.

13. Officers will continue to reject applications which clearly do not meet the eligibility criteria, thereby providing organisations with clarity at an early stage.
14. Where an organisation has a nominated Member representative they will be invited to comment in general on the work of the organisation.

Assessment process

15. Initial recommendations on levels of funding, within the overall budget of the scheme, will be made by a Grants Panel. Link officers will provide an initial assessment of the application and officers will carry out a financial appraisal of the organisation. The Panel will also receive copies of application forms and, for existing partners, their performance monitoring data. The Grants Panel will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Grants and two other Councillors. Officers from the Community Services team will support the Panel. When making a judgement on suggested grant levels the Grants Panel will take into account a number of factors which are detailed in section 9 of the Application Criteria.
16. 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 2015.

Partnership Agreements

17. 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, including specific monitoring data. The performance of organisations and their monitoring data will be scrutinised 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.

Waverley Voluntary Grants Partnership

18. The Waverley Voluntary Grants Partnership (WVGP) was established in 2004 as a partnership between Waverley, Surrey County Council and Surrey Primary Care Trust (PCT). The three partners pooled funds to support social welfare type services. The PCT withdrew from the scheme in November 2014 following the need to make significant cost savings and that they were being abolished in 2013. Since the PCT contributed the majority of the funding, this had a significant impact on organisations with the overall funding pot reducing from £270,000 to £85,000.

19. Since the overall budget for the scheme has reduced and requests for funding continue to put pressure on the pot, Officers from Surrey and Waverley have increasingly felt that the scheme is no longer fit for purpose. Following discussions, the 2015/16 funding round has been suspended and it is proposed to allocate the overall budget from the WVGP, which Surrey will continue to match, to develop a one-year pilot to commission specific activities around health and wellbeing that meet both the Borough and County Council's priorities. Smart, effective commissioning for specific activities will result in better outcomes for both the Council and residents. The proposed scheme, which will award funding from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, will be reported to the Executive at its meeting on 4 November.

Conclusion

20. 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

It is recommended that the Executive gives approval to:

1. the opening of the 2015/16 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.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Jane Todd

Telephone: 01483 523067

E-mail: jane.todd@waverley.gov.uk

Name: Katie Webb

Telephone: 01483 523340

E-mail: katie.webb@waverley.gov.uk