

**REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY GROUP MANAGER SAFER AND ENGAGED
COMMUNITIES****GRANT AID BUDGET – UPDATE ON COMMITMENTS 2012-15****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Grant Aid Budget and seek approval to commit some unallocated funding for 2013/14.

Information and Advice

2. As approved by the County Council's Budget Meeting 23rd February 2012, the Corporate Grant Aid Budget for 2012/13 is £2,142,000 this will be maintained at this level for 2013/14 and will reduce by £275,000 in 2014/15 – subject to the annual budget decisions of the Council.
3. In line with the Corporate Grant Aid Strategy, grant aid agreements have been awarded for a three year period. In addition, in order to help groups with their medium and long term planning the corporate grant aid year now runs from 1st July till 30th June, allowing for greater transparency and consistency once the County Council Budget is approved each year in February.
4. Uncommitted funds for 2013/14 are £273,500 which represents funding for Infrastructure and Befriending Services.

Befriending Services

5. When awards were recommended for 2012/13, a number of groups providing befriending services to older people in isolation were approved for 1 year whilst a review of befriending needs was undertaken. This has resulted in the launch of a commissioning process commencing in September with the intention to have a new contractor in place for April 2013. With this in mind it is proposed that no decision is made on the allocation of grant aid to befriending groups until the commissioning process is complete. Grant Aid funding for befriending services for 2012/13 totals £88,500.

Infrastructure Services

6. As part of the Corporate Grant Aid Strategy, funding for the Infrastructure bodies was recommended and agreed by the Members Reference Group in March 2011, it was also agreed that any grant aid funding, applied for and awarded post 2013 would be allocated on a 2 year basis, therefore aligning with, where possible, 3 year grant aid agreements for the majority of groups post 2015.

7. It is proposed that Infrastructure Organisations, as consortium, are given the opportunity to apply for grant aid funding for 2013/15 and that the criteria for applying to support their members with a range of services and development support is agreed as set out below:
- To support the County Council's strategic priorities
 - To identify any gaps in service provision and fill them by working with new groups to address unmet need and ensure that existing groups are equipped to tailor their services to changing needs
 - To raise standards by providing access to information on governance, funding, legal advice, training and quality assurance, so enabling many groups to acquire and maintain the knowledge, skills and resources they need to support the local community
 - To provide support to voluntary and community groups to manage their finances prudently
 - To provide developmental support to voluntary groups working in rural areas
 - To enable communication and collaboration through encouraging the sharing of resources and joint working to create more effective ways of working. This includes providing forums and networks to share good practice and expertise to be able to, for example, bid for public service commissioned contracts
 - To represent the diverse views of local groups to statutory agencies and promoting two way communication on policy developments, service redesign and working in partnership
8. Grant Aid funding for infrastructure organisations for 2012/13 totals £185,000. It is proposed that this level of commitment is maintained for 2013/14 and reduced in 2014/15 in line with all other funded groups

Other Options Considered

9. As part of the County Council's Grant Aid Strategy as outlined above it is not appropriate to consider other options at this stage

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. To provide an update to Members on the County Council's on the Grant Aid Budget and seek approval for inviting applications from Infrastructure Groups for 2013/15

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

12. That Members:

- i. Note the report
- ii. Approve an application round for Infrastructure Groups for 2013/15
- iii. Agree that no decision is made on the allocation of grant aid to befriending groups until the commissioning process is complete as outlined above.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 30/8/12)

13. The grant aid sub-committee has authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report.

Financial Comments (DD 30/8/12)

14. The budget for 2013/14 has not been agreed yet, so the proposed expenditure can only be earmarked against any future budget provision. Once budget provision for 2013/14 is known this commitment should be given priority over any future budget allocations.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

ALL