

9. Area Development Grants (Executive Decision)(Excepted Business)

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Purpose of the Report

This report asks members to consider recommendations for financial assistance to local organisations within Area West from the Area West Community Grants budget for the financial year 2009/10.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members

- (1) approve grants of £46,411 as shown in the summary table;
- (2) note that in future SSDC Community Grants Policy will require funded projects to have financial support from Parish or Town Councils;
- (3) instruct the Head of Area Development to agree with Chard Town Council how this policy can be implemented for the financial year 2010/11.

Background

Through the Community Grants scheme Area West Committee has been able to offer financial support to projects and organisations that contribute to the well being of local communities.

Members will be aware that the Community Grants scheme cannot be seen, or used by local organisations, as a source of sustainable long term core funding and that doing so would leave those organisations and their activities vulnerable when SSDC support is no longer available.

In April 2007, members indicated that they would actively encourage frequently supported organisations to achieve a higher proportion of their funding from other sources now on.

The applications received this year are all from organisations that have had support towards their running costs every year for the last 8 years or more. A significant element of those running costs includes rent or business rates. It has been suggested that the introduction of a peppercorn rent could reduce running costs where the organisation occupies an SSDC owned property. For this to be more than an accounting exercise, a significant element of responsibility for the costs of maintenance would have to be transferred to the tenant organisation. The report indicates where this possibility is being explored.

SSDC Grant Policy 4 - Service Level Agreements

For 2009-10 onwards, SSDC Grants Policy 4 requires any organisation requesting repeat funding to have a Service Level Agreement with SSDC based on:

- a) an agreed set of measurable targets against which performance will be monitored;
- b) monitoring of the continued health of the individual organisation;
- c) value for money being demonstrated.

SLAs will be no guarantee of repeat funding and applications will still be considered on an annual basis.

Area Development team members have drafted Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for all the applying organisations. These SLAs conform to SSDC policy.

All the SLAs indicate that they will last no longer than 5 years and will not be renewed. This gives ample time for organisations to develop other funding streams and increase income/reduce costs to enable their continued success.

There are two reasons for this:

- To support where possible, a phased reduction in annual financial support. Our grant fund is steadily reducing each year so the current level of funding will not be available in the future. The phased reduction of funding is the fair way to prepare groups for this reality.
- To “re-balance” the Area West Development Community grants budget so that a reasonable proportion of the fund can be used for pump priming new projects and new organisations.

The SLAs will be put in place before any grants are released.

SSDC Grant Policy 13 – Contributions from Parish or Town Councils

Grants Policy 13 states that “SSDC will only fund projects where a contribution is made by the Town or Parish Council. [and that] This contribution should be proportional to the size of the Parish.”

Members will note that none of this year’s grant applications from Chard organisations conform to this policy and this issue must be addressed. The Head of Area Development (West) is seeking the support of the Committee to fully implement this policy in respect of any community grant applications made in future. For this reason it is recommended that members instruct the Head of Area Development (West) to agree with Chard Town Council how the policy can be implemented for the financial year 2010/11.

Standard Grant Conditions

All grants agreed will be offered subject to the following conditions:

- proof that all partnership funding is secured;
- quotations for building work are obtained in line with SSDC financial procedures;
- where appropriate, reference is made to SSDC funding in any publicity material;
- building inspection is carried out prior to release of grant monies;
- the grant offer is kept open for one year only from the date of grant approval; however, applicants may reapply or request an extension;
- the grant is only to be used for the purpose specified in the offer letter.

Assessment of Applications

Each application has been through an assessment process against criteria laid down in the SSDC grants policy. Schemes need to be assessed at 22 points or above to be recommended for financial support. This year, all schemes were assessed at 22 – 26 points. A copy of the grant assessment form is attached at pages 17-23 for information.

Financial Implications

The maximum single grant allocation allowed is £12,500.

This year's grant budget is considerably smaller than 2008/09, which itself was smaller than 2007/08. In the current climate of enforced savings targets it is likely that the available funds will decrease each year.

The Area West Discretionary Grants budget available in 2009/10 is £48,630, approximately 5% less than in 2008/9.

Some applicants have recognised the realities of the constraints on SSDC budgets and have applied for a lower amount this year. A few have applied for a higher level of funding. A way forward that is fair to all applicants is to set the award level at 90% of last year's award. This will still give substantial funding to all applicants.

If these grants are approved, a balance of £2,219 will be available to support other community projects this year.

Summary Table of Grant Applications and Recommendations

Organisation	2008 Award	2009 Request	Purpose	Recommended Grant
Chard Museum	£9,500	£9,000	Ongoing running costs	£8,550
Crowshute House	£11,875	£15,000	Ongoing running costs	£10,688
Chard Young People Centre	£4,905	£13,933	Ongoing running costs	£4,415
CRESTA	£5,003	£5,529	Disc. Rate relief	£4,503
Crewkerne Aqua Centre	£9,129	£10,088	Disc. Rate relief	£8,216
Crewkerne Heritage Centre	£3,914	£4,050	Ongoing running costs	£3,523
West One Youth & Community Centre	£3,468	£3,150	Ongoing running costs	£3,121
Ile Youth Centre	£3,772	£3,400	Ongoing running costs	£3,395
Totals	£51,566	£64,150		£46,411

Detail of Grant Applications

Chard Museum (AW/09/233) - Assessment 23.5

Chard Museum has submitted an application for £9,000 to cover the cost of premises rental.

Museum running costs: £15,550

Income

Admissions, sales, donations	£ 5,700
Fundraising events	£ 800
Town Council	£ 0

Total Income: £ 6,500

Amount requested from SSDC £ 9,000

Additional information

The museum continues to be a useful resource for schools and local people, and an attraction for visitors to Chard. The management committee had been working with Diane Layzell from SSDC Property Services to develop a business case for developing the Museum's services and projections for attracting more visitors and becoming less reliant on grant funding. This case does look promising, however, with changes in management there is concern how this will be progressed.

Draft SLA has been completed and waiting for final sign off from the Museum committee.

In the past grants have been awarded to cover the organisation's running costs, which has ultimately covered their rent. This is an issue, which is continually being confused and with growing pressure on grants budgets the organisation needs to accept that rent is one of their running costs, so that they can successfully plan for the future.

Crowshute House (AW/09/240) Assessment 23.5

Crowshute House have submitted an application for £15,000 to cover the cost of premises rental.

This organisation exists to manage the Crowshute House leased from SSDC on behalf of the users of the building. The users are: Chard Amateur Theatrical Society, Chard Light Operatic Society, Chard Concert Brass and Crowshute House Association.

Building running costs: £19,843

Income

Own funds	£ 2,182
Room rentals	£ 2,661
Town Council	£ 0

Total Income: £ 4,843

Amount requested from SSDC £15,000
(Maximum allowed under grants policy is £12,500)

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Additional information

The management committee have been working with Diane Layzell from SSDC Property services to develop a business case for transfer and development of this SSDC owned building and to become less reliant on grant funding. This case does look promising, however, in the economic climate there is concern whether this will be progressed.

A Draft SLA has been completed and waiting for final sign off from the management committee.

Chard Young People's Centre (AW/09/235) Assessment 22

Chard Young People's Centre has submitted an application for £13,933 to cover running costs.

Youth Centre running costs: £27,210

Income

SCC funds	£ 750
Fees	£12,527
Town Council	£ 0

Total Income: £13,277

Amount requested from SSDC £13,933
(Maximum allowed under grants policy is £12,500)

Additional information

The Chard Youth Centre continues to provide a safe venue for young people to socialise. Funds from Opportunity Chard 2008 were used to improve an additional room to increase lettings. Other groups using the building include: Baby Clinic, U3A, Slimming World, Home Education etc.

CRESTA (AW/09/239) Assessment 26

The centre has made an application for £5,529 for discretionary rate relief. This is the amount due after mandatory charity relief.

Total cost of rates (after mandatory charity relief)	£ 5,529
Amount requested from SSDC	£ 5,529

Additional information

The CRESTA centre in Chard continues to provide sport and educational facilities to benefit all members of the local community. SSDC has supported the centre for a number of years with discretionary rate relief.

Crewkerne Leisure Management Ltd (AW/09/234) Assessment 23

CLM have made an application for £10,088 for discretionary rate relief on Crewkerne Aqua Centre. This is the amount due after mandatory charity relief.

Total cost of rates (after mandatory charity relief)	£10,088
Amount requested from SSDC	£10,088

Additional information

Over the past 12 months Crewkerne Aqua Centre has increased their GP referrals. Special exercises have been introduced in the gym for 13 – 16 year olds. There has been an increase in people taking part in swimming lessons and also an increase in private lessons for the hard to reach.

Crewkerne Heritage Centre (AW/09/236) Assessment 23

The Heritage Centre has made an application for £4,050 towards running costs

Running Costs **£8,980**

Income

Town Council	£1,500
Own funds	£ 710
Estimated income	£2,650
Total	£4,860

Amount requested from SSDC **£4,050**

Additional Information

Over the past 12 months Crewkerne Heritage Centre have been awarded full accreditation by the MLA. Visitor numbers have increased including the number of groups using the Centre. In May 2008 the museum held a successful outreach heritage roadshow where over 500 people visited their stand.

West One Youth & Community Centre (AW/09/237) Assessment 26

West One has made an application for £3,150 towards running costs

Running Costs **£19,482**

Income

Town Council	£ 7,250
Estimated income from fees etc	£ 7,900
Own funds	£ 1,182
Total income	£16,332

Amount requested from SSDC **£ 3,150**

Additional information

West One provides a home to a number of children and young peoples organisations in Crewkerne. The Play School recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. The youth club gained funding for the Happy Valley Graffiti Project and an arts project, which have benefited both the centre and the wider community. The third phase of refurbishment of the centre has been completed, which includes redecoration and carpeting of the main hall.

Ile Youth & Community Centre (AW/09/238) Assessment 24

Running Costs £19,225.33

Income

Town Council £ 3,100.00

Own funds £ 480.48

Local fundraising £ 5,700.00

Income from fees etc £ 6,544.85

Total income £15,825.33

Amount requested from SSDC £ 3,400.00

Additional information

Using funds obtained through Opportunity Ilminster has enabled the youth club to partition off the top area and kitchen from the main hall. This has enabled more groups to use the building and its facilities. More importantly this gave the Youth Centre the option to set up a drop in youth café for young people in the town. The drop in youth café commenced in autumn 2008 and is proving to be very popular.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

Funding all of the above projects will support the achievement of one or more of SSDC's Corporate Priorities.

Background Papers: *Grant application forms*
Area West Committee, April 2008, Agenda and Minutes
District Executive, January 2009, Agenda and Minutes