

Area West Committee – 20th June 2012

8. Area West – Community Grants - System of Delegation

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Purpose of the Report

To detail the procedure for assessing delegated grants within the Community Grant Scheme.

Public Interest

This report describes the mechanism used for assessing applications for Community Grants of £750 or less.

Recommendation

That members note the report.

The Community Grant Scheme

The Community Grant Scheme has been designed to assist local groups bring forward good projects that will benefit their communities. For grant requests above £750 all eligible applications are taken to the Area West Committee for consideration. For requests of £750 or less, Officers assessing the application may opt to use delegated authority to make a decision themselves and report that decision to a future meeting of the Area Committee.

The Community Grant Delegated Grant Scheme

The decision by the Officer to opt for the delegated grant scheme is normally made at the point of first enquiry. If the applicant is clear that their grant request will fall below £750, then the simpler application form will normally be sent (See Appendix 1). Whilst the application process is made as straightforward as possible for the scale of the project, the appraisal process is still rigorous.

Occasionally applicants have determined that their grant request will be above £750 at the outset and having completed the standard application form find that the grant required is below the threshold. On these occasions the Officer can assess the application as a delegated grant request, without requiring the completion of additional paperwork.

How it works

An application assessed under the scheme of delegation is still regarded as an application to the community grant scheme. This means, for example, that applicants are expected to approach their Town or Parish Council to seek a financial contribution towards the project.

The assessment process

Each application is scored using the same criteria. This will include:

- Eligibility of the organisation
- Target Groups
- Evidence of need
- Capacity of the organisation to deliver the project
- Financial need
- Innovation
- Contribution from the Town or Parish Council

Funding is only considered for projects scoring above 22 points when assessed against these criteria.

The assessment process reflects the level of detail provided in the simpler application form.

The Officer will seek the views of the elected member(s) for the project area as part of the overall assessment process and will only confirm his/her decision in consultation with those members and the Area Committee Chairman.

Town and Parish Council contributions

All applicants are asked to approach their Town or Parish Council to seek a contribution towards project costs. Whilst it is possible to approve a grant even if there is no such contribution, this is the exception rather than the rule.

Having reviewed the simple application form, it is clear that a specific request to contact the Town or Parish Council would improve it. I have amended the form accordingly and have attached a copy as an appendix.

Offer procedure

If the Officer's recommendation is for approval and no queries or objections have been raised by members within a 10 day period from circulation of the recommendation, an offer letter will be sent to the applicant.

How useful is this Scheme

I have found the delegated grant scheme a valuable option when assessing requests for smaller grants. Community groups have a simpler straightforward form to complete that is appropriate to the level of their funding request. The delegated grant scheme offers a quick and effective assessment process whilst maintaining the robustness of the scoring format.

Decisions made under delegated authority

To date seven applications have been assessed under the delegated grant scheme. In addition to four approved projects, a further application is at present under consideration whilst two further projects were rejected as ineligible.

In the period from March 2012 to May 2012 the following grants were made under delegated authority;

Organisation	Project	Total Cost	Grant	Date Approved
Ilminster Entertainment Society	A backdrop roller for a Youth Theatre.	£800	£400	22/03/2012
Chard 2000 and Chard in Bloom	Replanting of a Chard flowerbed	£500	£150	23/05/2012
Chard Good Companions	Five coach outings for older members of the Community.	£1,017	£500	23/05/2012
Wambrook Parish Council	Wambrook Village Book	£704	£500	23/05/2012
Total		£3,021	£1,550	

Financial Implications

The current budget allocation for the Area West Community Grants programme is £107,000. To date, the Area West Committee has approved grants to the value of £52,746. the further £1,550 approved by officers using delegated authority takes the total value of grants approved to £54,246 leaving a balance of £52,754 for further community grants.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI 188)

There are no implications in this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The projects for which grant aid have been awarded are accessible and open to appropriate sectors of the community.

Appendix 1: *Revised delegated grant scheme application form.*

Background Papers: *Community Grant Criteria
(www.southsomerset.gov.uk/communities/funding-for-your-group-or-project)
Grant applications on File*