

Area West Committee - 20th March 2013

8. Area West - Community Grants (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To consider applications for “tapering” revenue grants from eligible organisations in Area West for 2013/14

Public Interest

Grant applications have been submitted by five community groups to help towards their running costs.

Recommendations

1. That grants be awarded for the following amounts:

Chard Museum	- £ 1,710
Chard Young Peoples Centre	- £ 883
2. That the award of grants to the remaining eligible organisations be delegated to the Area Development Manager.

Background

The five local organisations listed in the summary table below have been in receipt of regular grants from the Area West Community Grants fund towards their running costs for a number of years.

In April 2009 Joint Area Committee West agreed that it was necessary to put a strategy in place that would ensure local community organisations did not come to rely on an annual grant from SSDC as a source of sustainable long term core funding.

In March 2010 Area West Committee agreed a strategy to reduce financial dependency in a fair and transparent way, allowing time for these organisations to develop other funding streams and increase income/reduce costs to enable their continued success. The strategy is based on a phased reduction in the maximum grant levels offered to these organisations, as shown in Table 1. The awarding of grants is still subject to an annual application and approval process, but the maximum amount available to each organisation reduces by 20% each year, using the 2009 awards as a baseline. All the listed organisations were made aware of the adopted strategy in March 2010.

This report refers to the fourth and final year of the tapering grant strategy.

Whilst it is not possible to say what would have happened if another strategy had been adopted, it is clear that the chosen strategy has been effective. All of the community

organisations continue to provide benefits to their local communities but none now depend on grants from Area West Committee for financial viability.

It should be noted that, with the sale of the West One Youth and Community Centre building for use as a GP Surgery, the youth and community work has been transferred to the new George Reynolds Centre (GRC), Crewkerne.

Table 1

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Maximum Grant Award	100%	80%	60%	40%	20%
Chard Museum	8,550	6,840	5,130	3,420	1,710
Chard Young peoples Centre	4,415	3,532	2,649	1,766	883
Crewkerne Heritage Centre	3,523	2,818	2,114	1,409	705
West One Youth & Community Centre/ GRC	3,121	2,497	1,873	1,248	624
Isle Youth Centre	3,395	2,716	2,037	1,358	679
Total	£23,004	£18,403	£13,803	£9,201	£4,601

Purpose of Grant Funding

The applications received this year are from five organisations that have had a Service Level Agreement with SSDC for the past four years. This means that they remain eligible to apply for funding up to the maximum amount shown in Table 1. They are all requesting funding towards their day-to-day running costs.

Assessment of Applications

Applications for more than £750 have been scored against criteria laid down in the SSDC grants policy. A score of less than 22 would lead to a recommendation for refusal. Chard Young Peoples Centre and Chard Museum have now been assessed at 22 points or above.

The remaining applications are all for grants of less than £750 and it is recommended that assessment of these be delegated to the Area Development Manager.

Chard Museum

Chard Museum trustees have submitted an application for £1,710 to contribute towards the cost of premises rental.

Museum Running Costs £18,010

Income: £	
Town Council (TBC)	1,000
Own funds / admissions	3,800
Fundraising	3,000
Lottery award	800
Friends of the museum	4,500
Profit / gift aid	3,200
Total Income £	£16,300

Amount requested from SSDC £1,710

Additional Information

Chard and District Museum is a registered charity, which has existed in the local community since 1970. It occupies a building rented from South Somerset District Council. The museum is open from April until October and last year welcomed 1,868 visitors. This is a 7.5 % increase in numbers over 2011/12 due in part to more flexible opening hours by appointment. Use of the museums website has also increased significantly with over 4,000 visits to the site in the last twelve months. The museum committee continue to make every effort to reduce overheads and seek new income streams, which this year have included museum at night and heritage open day events.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – Working creatively with partners to support important local facilities.

Chard Young People's Centre

Chard Young People's Centre have submitted an application for £883 to contribute towards their annual running costs.

Centre Running Costs £26,882

Income	
Town Council(TBC)	£1,000
Own Funds	£24,999
Total Income	£25,999

Amount requested from SSDC £883

Additional Comments

Chard Young People's Centre is a registered charity, which has provided a valued local resource since the 1970's. It occupies a building rented from South Somerset District Council.

The aim of the Chard Young Peoples Centre is the provision of youth services for Chard and the surrounding area. The Centre is also a venue for a range of other community groups including a home education centre.

In May 2011, I was asked to undertake an exercise to resolve the Centre's outstanding questions over their lease, which had resulted in the lease remaining unsigned for a number of years. It was important to ensure that whilst grant funding for running costs is tapering down, SSDC would still be in a position to offer the Centre support.

The issues to be resolved have included demarcating the external boundaries of the building, resolving responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the property and addressing the problem of the outdated and inadequate heating system.

The external boundary lines have now been confirmed and the Young Peoples Centre management understand their responsibilities for care and maintenance of the property. SSDC have offered to provide a maintenance service for the property, although this will be at the Centre's cost.

SSDC have now installed a modern boiler which has made heating better and more cost effective in the building and the lease has been agreed by both parties.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – Working creatively with partners to deliver local services and support important local facilities.

Crewkerne Heritage Centre

Amount requested from SSDC: £705

Crewkerne Heritage Centre is a very popular and highly regarded attraction within the town. The Heritage Centre houses a museum, local history room and a lettable meeting room. The trustees, supported by a dedicated group of volunteers, have worked hard to increase the profile of the Heritage Centre, raise funds and keep running costs to a minimum.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – Working creatively with partners to support important local facilities.

West One Youth & Community Centre

Amount requested from SSDC: £624

The West One Youth & Community Centre had provided a home to the after school club, the playgroup and a variety of youth sessions.

A major priority for the Trustees has been their involvement in progressing the project to build the George Reynolds Centre, a new community youth and sport facility at Henhayes. The George Reynolds Centre is now complete and a successor organisation to West One is now in residence.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – Working creatively with partners to deliver local services and support important local facilities.

Ile Youth & Community Centre

Amount requested from SSDC: £679

The Ile Youth & Community Centre continues to provide a venue for a range of activities for all sectors of the community. Active Learning and Skills deliver three very popular sessions a week from the centre, these are:

- Teen Zone for 13 – 19 year olds on a Tuesday evening
- The Buzz – aimed at years 7 & 8, a chill out session where they can meet up with their friends.
- Fun Time Fridays - for school years 3 to 6 that involves lots of fun activities including sports, games and arts and crafts.

In addition Ile Youth Centre hosts regular sessions for classes like ballet and is used for events such as the annual Ilminster Flower, veg and craft show.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – Working creatively with partners to support important local facilities.

Table 2: Summary of Recommendations

Organisation	2012 Award	2013 Request	Purpose	Points scored	Recommended Grant
Chard Museum	3,420	1,710	Ongoing running costs	22	£1,710
Chard Young Peoples Centre	1,766	883	Ongoing running costs	24	£883
Crewkerne Heritage Centre	1,409	705	Ongoing running costs		Delegate
West One Youth & Community Centre (George Reynolds Centre)	1,248	624	Ongoing running Costs		Delegate
Ile Youth Centre	1,358	679	Ongoing running costs		Delegate
Total	£9,201	£4,601			

Financial Implications

The recommended awards, including those made under delegated authority, can be met from the 2013/2014 Area West Community grants budget.

Carbon Emissions & adapting to climate change Implications

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

It is my opinion that the projects for which grant aid is being requested are open and accessible and no-one is likely to receive less favourable treatment as a result of any decision made to award a grant.

Background Papers: *Grant application forms*
 Area West Committee April 2012 agenda and minutes
 Area West Committee June 2011 agenda and minutes
 Area West Committee March 2010 agenda and minutes
