

# Scrutiny Committee Report

Report of Head of Corporate Strategy

Author: Jayne Bolton

Telephone: 01491 823136

Textphone: 18001 01491 823136

E-mail: jayne.bolton@southandvale.gov.uk

Cabinet member responsible: Councillor Bill Service

Tel: 01235 510810

E-mail: bill.service@hotmail.co.uk

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## AGENDA ITEM 4

## Review of Community Investment Fund Grant Policy and Procedures

### Recommendation

(a) That the committee considers the amendments and additions to the community investment fund grant policy and procedures as detailed within this report.

### Purpose of Report

1. To consider the proposed amendments and additions to the community investment fund grant policy and procedures.

### Strategic Objectives

2. The award of community grants supports the corporate priority to strengthen local communities by providing support to local groups to provide services and solutions in their local communities.

### Background

3. The CIF Panel met on 21 June 2011 to consider 15 grant applications requesting a total of £1.2 million against a budget of £500,000. The CIF Panel agreed its recommendations with the relevant cabinet member who has delegated authority

to determine the grant awards and these decisions were published on 24 June 2011. This resulted in eight applications receiving grants totalling £449,996.

4. The CIF Panel evaluated each application using a scoring criteria approved by Cabinet on 8 April 2010; they visited each site and heard presentations from each applicant. The decision process was detailed and robust but some councillors felt that the process could be improved by making some amendments to the scheme.
5. Officers discussed the proposed amendments with the relevant cabinet member who also suggested further amendments to the scheme.
6. The suggested amendments and additions to the scheme are detailed in the tables below and a full copy of the updated community investment fund grant policy and procedures is attached at appendix 1 to this report.

<b>Table 1 - Scheme eligibility criteria</b>	
Applications will only be considered if organisations/projects meet the following eligibility criteria (these are in addition to the existing criteria)	
<b>Description</b>	<b>Reason/rationale</b>
The organisation has not received a capital grant award in the previous two years	To ensure the grant budget is shared by a variety of organisations throughout the district
The organisation either owns or has a lease on the land or property for a minimum of 10 years	To ensure the grant benefits the community for a minimum period of 10 years

<b>Table 2 - Decision process</b>	
<b>Description</b>	<b>Reason/rationale</b>
The number of councillors on the CIF Panel is reduced from twelve to five consisting of a representative from each political group	To save costs and resources (printing and transport costs) and to make decision making easier
CIF Panel members must attend <b>all</b> meetings to be eligible to vote regarding any application	To ensure all CIF Panel members receive the same information about each application
The CIF Panel will receive a detailed evaluation report and presentation from officers including a recommendation on the scores for each application	To ensure the CIF Panel receives clear and unbiased information about each application
CIF Panel members <b>will not</b> be able to vote on applications within their own ward	To ensure a transparent and fair decision making process
CIF Panel is able to recommend that grant awards <b>are not</b> given if an organisation has sufficient reserves to fund the project (even if the project score would normally be high enough to do so)	To enable the CIF Panel to decide whether or not to grant an award to an organisation that has sufficient reserves to fund the project themselves; taking into account the pressures from all of the applications and the budget available.

7. The current scoring criteria include a section about how well each project contributes to the current priorities of the council. New priorities will come into force from April 2012 and Cabinet will consider the implications of this in February 2012.

### **Financial Implications**

8. There are no direct financial implications contained within this report.

### **Legal Implications**

9. Subject to the approval of full council the constitution will need to be amended to reflect the proposed amendments to the community investment fund grant policy and procedure rules.

### **Risks**

10. There are no additional risks arising from this report.

### **Other Implications**

11. There are no other implications to consider within this report.

### **Conclusion**

9. The committee is asked for its comments on the suggested amendments and additions to the community investment fund grant policy and procedure rules.

### **Background Papers**

- Report to Cabinet of 14 February 2011 – agenda item 6