

Record of Cabinet portfolio holder decision

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision made by	Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie
Key decision?	Yes
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	
Name and job title of officer requesting the decision	Jayne Bolton, Grants Team Leader
Officer contact details	Tel: 01235 422437 Email: jayne.bolton@southandvale.gov.uk
Decision	To approve a new policy for awarding revenue grants, which is attached in appendix one.
Reasons for decision	<p>In 2012 we awarded 16 voluntary organisations just over £1m of revenue grants for a four year period (2013/14 – 2016/17) as they met one or more of our grant priorities; advice, care services or the prevention of anti-social behaviour. These grants are now in their final year so the council needs to approve a new revenue grant policy for 2016-2020.</p> <p>Officers propose the new policy links to the new corporate plan priorities for 2016-2020 rather than the previous priorities listed above (as shown in appendix one).</p> <p>The new policy will accept applications from voluntary organisations who can request funding for another four year period, the minimum amount being £10,000 and the maximum £100,000.</p>
Alternative options rejected	Continuation of the previous grant policy that was used for the period 2013/14 – 2016/17.
Legal implications	<p>According to the council's scheme of delegations, the cabinet member for grants has delegated authority to take all decisions with respect to grants and can approve changes to the revenue grant policy.</p> <p>However, if the cabinet member for grants wishes to amend the total budgeted amount in any one year this will require further authorisation by cabinet and/or council.</p> <p>The terms of reference for the grants panel will need to be amended to enable it to consider the applications under the new policy and make recommendations to the cabinet member for grants.</p>

	<p>The council will use its general powers under Chapter 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to offer this funding.</p> <p>Each organisation we fund will have to enter into a legal grant agreement that will include monitoring targets and a requirement to submit their accounts each year.</p> <p>Specialist legal advice has been received to ensure the policy complies with State Aid regulations.</p>			
Financial implications	<p>The current ongoing annual revenue grants budget is £420,000 or £1,680,000 over four years. Cabinet has complete flexibility over how it wants to allocate the £1,680,000 over the four-year period and that will depend on the organisations it decides to fund. Any future grants awarded by cabinet will be subject to approval of the council's annual budget.</p> <p>£165,620 of the budget has been ring fenced for 2017/18 until a separate grant award to the CAB is determined. This will be a separate decision made by the cabinet member for grants, following consultation with cabinet colleagues, in due course.</p>			
Other implications				
Background papers considered				
Declarations/conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/officer consulted by the Cabinet member?				
List consultees		Name	Outcome	Date
	Ward councillors			
	Legal	Pat Connell	We have taken specialist external advice regarding State Aid issues and amended the policy accordingly to make sure it is compliant.	4/7/16
	Finance	Simon Hewings	No issues	3/6/2016
	Human resources			
	Sustainability			
	Diversity and equality	Cheryl Reeves	Equality Impact Assessment completed and attached at appendix 2 of the report.	2/6/16
	Communications		A communications plan will be prepared to advertise the new scheme to potential	8/7/16

			applicants.	
Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt category?	No			
Call-in waived by Scrutiny Committee chairman?	No			
Cabinet portfolio holder's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	Signature <i>Elizabeth Gillespie</i> Date 8/7/16			

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

For Democratic Services office use only		
Form received	Date: 8-7-16	Time: 15:35
Date published to all councillors	Date: 8-7-16	
Call-in deadline	Date: 15-7-16	Time: 17:00

Appendix One

Revenue Grants Policy

2017/18 – 2020/21



Listening Learning Leading

INTRODUCTION

We want to offer grant support for a four-year period to community organisations who can help us deliver our new corporate objectives. We recognise the value of local community organisations delivering key services to our residents and their need for grants that extend for more than a one-year period.

We will favour organisations who are actively exploring partnership/joint working with other voluntary organisations, businesses or the public sector and/or other methods to help them to become more sustainable.

WHAT TYPE OF SERVICE WILL THE SCHEME FUND?

We can fund a range of activities through this scheme but they must offer a direct benefit to our residents by meeting a clearly identified need and a measurable contribution to at least one of our corporate priorities and/or the council's equality objectives.

The corporate priorities are:

- Invest in the districts' future
- services that reflect residents' needs
- be tough on enforcement
- unlock the potential of Didcot
- homes and jobs for everyone
- build thriving communities.

Information about the corporate plan priorities and the council's equality objectives is available at www.southoxon.gov.uk

We will fund services that benefit residents of South Oxfordshire (if a service covers a wider area the costs will need to be pro-rata):

- core revenue funding such as;
 - salary costs relating to the activities being supported
 - rent and rates etc for the location of the service (ideally in South Oxfordshire)
 - training staff in new skills to deliver services in our district (or a proportion if it's a county wide service)
 - marketing and publicity for new/extended services, which those organisations provide, or a proportion for general publicity that includes a new service

- professional fees directly linked to collaborative working with others, or starting or extending a service
- transport costs (such as mileage expenses), where they are clearly required as part of the objectives of the organisation.

We will not fund:

- services that offer minimal benefit to residents of South Oxfordshire
- topping up savings and reserves
- purchase of large items of equipment (covered by our capital grant scheme)
- purchase of vehicles
- new heating systems(covered by our capital grant scheme)
- the purchase of a new lease(covered by our capital grant scheme)
- extensions to premises (covered by our capital grant scheme)

WHO CAN APPLY TO THE SCHEME?

Any constituted **local** voluntary sector organisation may apply.

This scheme is **not** open to:

- town/parish councils
- other statutory bodies, or organisations providing a service on behalf of a statutory body
- unincorporated groups and associations
- education providers (schools, free schools, academies, colleges and similar).

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AWARDS?

We will accept applications for a **minimum** grant of £10,000 and a **maximum** grant of £100,000 over the four-year period.

We'll limit awards to a **maximum of one-third (33.33 per cent)** of an organisation's total annual running costs in **any** financial year.

In very exceptional cases, like a major funder pulling out of a project that offers significant benefit to our residents we will consider requests for more than these amounts. Applicants must get approval from the grants team before submitting an application. (The online application system will not allow exceptional requests without our approval).

GRANT REDUCTION OVER THE FOUR YEARS

We'll favour organisations who can show a year-on-year reduction in their grant request over the four-year grant period without reducing services. They must submit

plan explaining how they'll manage/compensate for the reduction without reducing their front line services.

BUDGET

We have a provisional budget of £1,680,000 over the four-year period; this is subject to annual approval by the council when setting its budgets.

HOW ORGANISATIONS APPLY

We have a two-stage application process for this scheme. Stage one is an initial expression of interest open to any non-profit organisation and stage two is a full application by invitation only.

OPENING, CLOSING AND DECISION DATES

Expressions of interest round:

Open mid-July 2016; close 15 September 2016 with decisions in October 2016.

Full application stage:

Open (by invitation only) 17 October 2016, close 28 November 2016, with decisions in February/March 2017.

SCHEME ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Stage one: expression of interest

Organisations must:

- have a specific and relevant activity or service they provide locally and that contributes to at least one of our corporate objectives
- provide evidence that there is a need for such an activity or service and that it benefits residents of South Oxfordshire
- provide details of the estimated costs to provide the activity or service each year, over the four-year period and how they'll fund the rest of these costs
- confirm they can provide the necessary documents listed below if invited to make a full application.

Stage two - full application:

In the full application, we will ask organisations for the following documents and information:

- a signed constitution, articles of association or equivalent
- full accounts for the last two years (or a detailed working budget and financial plan for new organisations)

- a detailed budget for year one and a funding plan for the following three years
- project delivery and development plans showing plans for more collaborative work with others to become more sustainable in the longer term
- insurance, safeguarding, H&S, equalities, data protection and other relevant policies
- evidence of need for the service/work/activity, including local strategies, official reports and similar
- suggested outcomes or targets we can use to help measure the success of the service/work/activity each year over the grant period
- two references (for organisations the council has not worked with before).

DECISION MAKING

Stage one

Officers will use the matrix shown at appendix A to assess the stage one applications and to recommend a shortlist to the Head of Corporate Strategy and the Cabinet Member for Grants who will decide which organisations we will invite to complete the stage two application.

Stage two

Officers will then invite the shortlisted organisations to make a full application and evaluate them using the matrix at appendix B. Officers will recommend scores and grant awards to the grants panel for consideration.

The grants panel will decide the final scores and make grant award recommendations to cabinet.

Cabinet will consider the grant panel's recommendations when determining the revenue grant awards. Any awards over £25,000 will be subject to the council's call-in procedure.

STANDARD CONDITIONS AND PENALTIES FOR REVENUE GRANT AWARDS

- the organisation must enter into a formal grant agreement with us before they can receive any funding
- awards are subject to annual approval of the council's budget for each financial year of the grant period
- organisations must provide satisfactory monitoring information by the deadlines set out in the grant agreement to continue receiving payments
- organisations must spend the grant in the financial year it was paid. We will deduct any grant remaining from the following year's payment
- organisations must consult with us before making any significant changes to the service or their general organisation structure

- organisations must ensure they comply with all statutory legislation, for example health and safety, safeguarding, equalities and human rights
- organisations will have suitable insurance in place for the duration of the grant
- organisations must acknowledge our support in any publicity about the service we are funding.

We may add extra conditions to any grant during the decision making process if we consider it necessary.

The Head of Corporate Strategy has delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Grants to remove any grant conditions or amend any targets following a written request from the organisation.

We will confirm organisations have met all relevant grant conditions before making any payments.

Failure to meet all of the agreed grant conditions may delay payment or, in extreme cases, result in termination of the grant.

PAYMENT OF GRANTS

We will release all annual grants of £20,000 or more in two equal stages, the first half at the start of the year (April) and the balance approximately six months later, after a **satisfactory** mid-year monitoring review against targets (September).

We will pay annual grants of less than £20,000 in one payment, the first in April 2017 and subsequently on an annual basis after a **satisfactory** monitoring review against targets.

If an organisation supplies monitoring data or other requested documents within two months after the submission deadline, we will deduct the following year's grant by ten per cent.

If an organisation has not supplied their monitoring data or other requested documents within two months after the submission deadline, we will consider them organisation in breach of our grant agreement and we will terminate their grant.

If an organisation performs below target without valid reasons, we will reduce our next grant payment proportionately to reflect the drop in performance, for example if they are ten per cent below target, we will deduct ten per cent from their next payment.

Appendix A - Expression of interest - shortlisting scoring matrix:

We will only consider applications submitted by the application deadline (including all required documents).

We will automatically reject applications from organisations who have not provided the necessary documents to meet the eligibility criteria by the closing date.

Criteria	Low (1-5)	Medium (6-10)	High (11-15)	Very High (16-20)
Will the organisation help us meet one or more of our corporate priorities and/or the council's equality objectives? Based on evidence provided will the service address an identified local need in South Oxfordshire?	Low levels of contribution to any of our corporate priorities and/or the council's equality objectives	Medium levels of contribution to one or more of our priorities and/or the council's equality objectives	High levels of contribution to one or more of our priorities and/or the council's equality objectives	Very high levels of contribution to one or more of our priorities and/or the council's equality objectives
Do the estimated costs provided for the service seem realistic to meet the identified needs in the local area.	Low levels of identified proven local need	Medium levels of identified proven local need	High levels of identified proven local need	Very high levels of identified proven local need
	The funding plan is brief and not well developed	The funding plan is developed to a reasonable level.	The funding plan is highly developed and realistic.	The funding plan is very highly developed and realistic

Maximum score is 60 points	Priority level
15 - 30	Low priority – organisation not invited to apply to the second round
31 - 44	Medium priority – subject to budget availability invite organisation to apply to the second round
45 - 50	High priority – invite organisation to submit an application for the second round
51 or over	Very high priority – invite and encourage organisation to submit an application for the second round

Appendix B - Full application scoring matrix:

We will automatically reject any applications that have not submitted all the required eligibility documents by the closing date.

Financial review

Do they have:	0 points	1 point	2 points
A plan to reduce the amount of our grant year on year and how they'll manage this reduction without reducing their service	No	Partly – they have only planned minor reductions and/or reductions in some years and not all four	Yes – they have planned a reasonable reduction over the four-year grant term with supporting evidence of how they will manage this.
A long term financial plan (ideally covering the next five years)	No	Yes – a financial plan has been submitted and is satisfactory	Yes – a detailed financial plan has been submitted and is comprehensive
At least one year's running costs in reserve (excluding new organisations)	No		Yes
Evidence they've covered all their costs without making a loss in the last two years (excluding new organisations)	No		Yes
What other funding sources have they identified?	None	Other funders identified but funding not yet secured	They've secured all their other revenue funding

General review

Criteria	0 points	1 point	2 points
How did they identify the local need for their service/activity?	No evidence of a local need other than their own opinion	There's some external research on this need, or some evidence has been provided	There is strong evidence of the need which is clearly identified in local strategies, plans or other reports
Will the organisation help us meet one or more of our corporate priorities and/or the council's equality objectives?	Low levels of contribution to any of our corporate priorities and/or the council's equality objectives.	A medium to high level of contribution to one or more of our priorities and/or the council's equality objectives.	Very high levels of contribution to one or more of our priorities and/or the council's equality objectives.
Does the organisation have a volunteering policy and actively encourage volunteers?	No evidence provided	No formal policy exists but the organisation does recruit volunteers.	A volunteering policy exists and the organisation has an active volunteer base.
What evidence is there that this service is the best way to meet the local need?	No evidence provided	Some evidence it could meet the need but there are other options	Significant levels of evidence that this is the best solution
What support does this service have from relevant officers and from other agencies?	No support or negative feedback from officers or other agencies	Some general support from officers or other agencies	Officers or other agencies strongly support this specific service
What evidence is there that their	No evidence of how they	Some research when setting	Significant levels of research and the outcomes

measurable outcomes/targets are reasonable and achievable?	set the outcomes and/or they aren't reasonable	outcomes but they seem too high or low	seem reasonable
How reasonable and achievable is their project plan (based on evidence provided)	It's unlikely they'll achieve their plan To continue an existing service with no changes to the service or their funding	They might achieve some of their plan, but there are concerns/risks To improve an existing service or continue one if they've lost funding	We're confident they'll deliver the majority or all of their plan To expand their existing range of services/areas covered or to launch a new service
What is the funding for?			

maximum score is 22 points	
0 – 15 points	Low priority funding
16 – 18 points	Medium priority funding
19 – 22 points	High priority funding

Equality Act 2010 and human rights check

SERVICE NAME: CORPORATE STRATEGY – REVENUE GRANTS POLICY UPDATE

- Is this review:
- covering a function/service for South only
 - covering a function/service for Vale only
 - covering a function/service across both councils

Briefly outline the changes you are proposing:

The current ongoing annual revenue grants budget is £420,000 or £1,680,000 over four years.

The council needs to approve a new revenue grant policy to bring it in line with the new Corporate Plan for 2016-2020.

We are proposing to make changes to the maximum grant and the percentage we award as follows:

We will accept applications for a **minimum** grant of £10,000 and a **maximum** grant of £100,000 over the four-year period.

We **will not award more than one third (33.33 per cent)** of an organisation's total annual running costs in any financial year

The above will not apply to the CAB, where the council proposes to ring fence £165,620 of the budget until a separate grant award to the CAB is determined. Other exceptional circumstances will also be considered.

The council will favour organisations who apply for funding showing a year on year reduction over the four-year grant period and/or are actively exploring partnerships for joint working and/or other methods to help them to become more sustainable.

Equality Act duty	Yes/No	Notes to demonstrate compliance
<p>Will any changes to the service or policy directly or indirectly discriminate against people who are protected by the Act¹ and eliminate harassment?</p>	<p>Possibly</p>	<p>2017/18 – 2020/21 is a new round of four year funding, so previous applicants are aware that they are not guaranteed continued funding. However the council has previously funded a number of organisations that help to support vulnerable people. It is possible that some of these organisations may find it hard to demonstrate how they can help the council to deliver our new Corporate Plan objectives. This could result in them receiving a lower grant or in extreme cases not being invited to submit an application.</p> <p>The policy could be updated to contribute towards the Corporate plan objectives and/or the council's equality objectives. The equality objectives (see appendix 1 below) have been subject to internal and external consultation and have been included in the councils Corporate Plan. These form part of the context in which the Corporate Plan should be read.</p> <p>Based on the previous revenue grant applicants, the proposal to only fund 33 per cent of an organisation's total annual running costs in any financial year would only impact on two of the current organisations. One of which is the CAB the other Berinsfield information centre. As referred to above the CAB funding will be ring fenced. Reducing the percentage of funding to the Berinsfield information centre could have a significant impact as they currently receive 67 per cent of the funding through the council. Berinsfield is a deprived area and although not a specific Corporate Plan priority the council is preparing a comprehensive regeneration strategy and delivery plan for Berinsfield, so it would seem</p>

¹ Protected characteristics 'age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation' marriage and civil partnership applies to discrimination but not to advancing equality of opportunity

Equality Act duty	Yes/No	Notes to demonstrate compliance
		<p>counterproductive to reduce their percentage. If the information centre reapplies for funding consideration could be given to applying the exceptional circumstances rule.</p> <p>A reduction in funding each year could indirectly impact on vulnerable people if the organisations receiving the funding support these groups and as a result are unable to provide the same level of service. However the policy is not that the council won't provide the same level of funding each year, but the application would be more likely to receive a higher score if they are able to demonstrate how over time they will become more sustainable.</p>
<p>Have reasonable adjustments been made for people with disabilities to ensure they can use the service? This might mean treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs</p>	<p>Not currently</p>	<p>A number of organisations that previously received a grant supported people with disabilities. But a number of new grant recipients may support people with disabilities.</p> <p>The policy criteria could be updated to include a criteria relating to meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, which would include people with disabilities.</p>
<p>Will the service or policy changes advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic? This means will they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. • Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of 	<p>Possibly indirectly</p>	<p>The proposal to change the minimum grant application to £10,000 could result in an increase in grant funding to some organisations. Which if these organisations support vulnerable people will indirectly help to advance equal opportunities or foster good relations.</p> <p>If the criteria is updated to enable scoring against meeting the needs of vulnerable groups and or supporting delivery against the councils equality objectives, this will help advance equality of opportunity.</p>

Equality Act duty	Yes/No	Notes to demonstrate compliance
other people. Will the service or policy changes help to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it e.g will the changes help to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between the different groups	Indirectly	Through funding organisations - see above comment
Will the service or policy change protect and promote human rights	Yes	Currently the policy refers to the need to comply with all statutory legislation e.g. equalities and safeguarding. This could be strengthened to include reference to Human Rights.

Action plan for mitigating action or advancing equality of opportunity

Action	Person responsible	Target completion date
Consider updating the policy to enable the applications to contribute towards the Corporate plan objectives and/or the council's equality objectives	Jayne Bolton	Complete – policy updated to include the council's equality objectives.
Consider updating the policy criteria to include meeting the needs of vulnerable groups	Jayne Bolton	Complete – by including the council's equality objectives this will ensure consideration of vulnerable groups during the evaluation of each application.

Consider updating the standard conditions to make reference to complying with the Human Rights legislation	Jayne Bolton	Complete – the policy has been updated.
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Once completed:

Date completed: 2/6/2016

Signed _____ J Bolton _____ (Officer)

Signed _____ Clare Kingston 8 July 2016 _____ (Head of service or service manager)

Signed _____ Cheryl Reeves _____ (Cheryl Reeves, equalities officer)

Appendix 1 – Equality Objectives

Overarching vision ' Ensure the provision of fair and accessible services and employment opportunities that meet the needs of everyone, and positively promote inclusion'

1. Continue to improve physical access to council owned or leased buildings or land.
2. Ensure new projects, policies or strategies, changes to services, and communication take account of the needs of all users.
3. Increase our understanding of the communities we serve, through consultation, engagement and using existing evidence (e.g. census data) to inform the decisions we make.
4. Continue to monitor the impact of our employment policies and practices to ensure all groups have access to employment opportunities.

5. Support communities to deliver better outcomes for disadvantaged groups and encourage community cohesion.
6. Seek to improve access to major new developments and town centres in South Oxfordshire and the Vale for people with disabilities, carers and older people.