

**WEST JOINT COMMITTEE
26 JUNE 2008**

Subject: Community Grants

Lead Officer: Contact Chris Wood on 01789 260640 or Martin Gibbins on 01789-290784

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Chris Williams (SDC)
Councillor Peter Fowler (WCC)

Summary

It is proposed that the Community Grants offered by Stratford on Avon District Council, and the equivalent grants offered by Warwickshire County Council, are combined into a single grants scheme awarded through the Joint Committees. The Joint Committee is asked its views on how the scheme should be operated; and asks that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee represent it on a working party to progress this topic.

Recommendation

- (1) The Committee comments on the proposals for operating a combined grants scheme contained in this report;**
 - (2) The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee represent it on a working party to progress arrangements for a combined grants scheme.**
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1 Background/Information

- 1.1 Following the establishment of 3 Joint Committees, the opportunity exists for the grants awarded at local level by both Warwickshire County Council and Stratford on Avon District Council to be integrated into a single scheme with two elements. The first element is to provide a fund that community groups apply to. The second is to provide a fund that supports project activity developed to address priorities identified by the Joint Committees.
 - 1.2 Advantages of such a scheme would include:
 - (a) Simplification of the process by which community organisations can secure grant funding, through a single process;
 - (b) Economies of scale in administration of the grants service;
 - (c) The opportunity to improve service quality by utilising the best aspects of the service currently offered by both authorities
 - (d) Enable projects to be supported that address local priorities
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2 Financial Availability

- 2.1 Creation of a single unified grants fund will result in a potential overall pot of £397,020 per annum, made up as shown in figure A.

Figure A: Potential funding available through single grant fund

Funding from Stratford-on-Avon District Council	Budget 2008/09
Community Grants – Capital funding	£200,000
Community Grants – Revenue funding	£44,000
Funding from Warwickshire County Council	
Well being Fund	£63,890
Social Inclusion Fund	£56,450
Community Development Fund	£32,680
TOTAL AVAILABLE	£397,020

- 2.2 It is proposed that a combined grants scheme operates from the September round of Joint Committee Meetings.
- 2.3 There are a number of significant differences in the way WCC and SDC operate their respective grants schemes. These differences, together with some suggestions on which might be adopted for the combined grants scheme, are shown in Appendix A.
- 2.4 In addition to the determination of grants, discussion is currently taking place on the creation of a shared service to administer the grants function, though that process is outside the remit of this report.

3 Options available to the Committee

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to comment on which approach it prefers in each of the areas shown in Appendix A.

4 Members' Comments

- 5.1 None Received

5 Implications of the proposal

5.1 *Legal/Human Rights Implications*

- 5.1.1 There are no adverse legal/human rights implications to this report Individual grant applications will be assessed before submission to the Joint Committee

5.2 *Financial*

- 5.2.1 No comments received

5.3 *Environmental*

- 5.3.1 All grant applicants are encouraged to adopt sound environmental principles as part of the delivery of their project.

5.4 *Equality Impact Assessment*

- 5.4.1 There are no adverse legal/human rights implications to this report
Equality Impact will be considered as part of each grant application
presented to the Joint Committee.

6 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 Failure to identify solutions to the issues identified may adversely affect
the delivery of grants to the community and this could bring the Councils
into disrepute. This risk is assessed as LOW.
- 6.1.1 Risk assessment will be considered as part of each grant application
presented to the Joint Committee.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 There are significant benefits to combining the Community Grants
offered by Stratford on Avon District Council, and the equivalent grants
offered by Warwickshire County Council. The Joint Committee is asked
its views on how a combined grants scheme should be operated; and
asked to agree that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee represent
it on a working party to progress this topic with a view to reporting back
to the next meeting.

Robert Walsh
HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Martin Gibbins
AREA MANAGER
Warwickshire County Council

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MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMUNITY GRANTS OFFERED BY STRATFORD-ON-AVON DISTRICT COUNCIL AND WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Discussion Point	SDC	WCC	Suggestion Solution
1. Maximum award	Offers percentage of total project cost based on criteria achieved (see section 5.) – the higher the number of criteria met, the higher the proportion of total project cost the grant level would normally be.	CDF - Offers a Maximum grant of £5,000 WBF/SIF – No upper limit per project	New process to be developed
2. Grant approval	Committee decides based upon the report submitted to it	The Area Committee Funding sub-group considers applications and makes recommendations to Area Committee for decision.	Process to be reviewed
3. Decision taking	Public allowed to make representations to Area Community Committee supporting their application but are excluded when funding decisions are made.	Funding sub group may seek clarification on project proposal. Public can speak and remain during Area Committee consideration of applications. Decisions are taken in public	
4. Types of Funds	Separate revenue and capital grants funds that can only be used for a approved project	Makes no distinctions between revenue and capital.	Create one grants fund with no arbitrary financial or thematic constraints or divisions

Discussion Point	SDC	WCC	Suggestion Solution
5. Criteria	Each application is scored against the objectives in the Council's Corporate Strategy. Additional points are added for projects targeted at areas of high deprivation; and those considered of particular value to the community.	CDF - applications are scored against CDF criteria that take account of deprivation, sustainability and other factors. WBF/SIF – Projects are developed that meet priorities for the Area Committee based on themes identified in LAA	LAA themes plus deprivation mapping.
7. Officer Delegation	There is delegated authority for officers to award grants of up to £400 (describe circumstances and consultation)	£Nil	£500
8. Grants of District-wide significance	Referred to Executive committee	Grants/project funding can be awarded for schemes that cover the District	Community Grants encompassing more than 1 Joint Committee's boundaries could be considered by the Committees affected by the proposal. If all Committees agreed to award the grant, the funds would be allocated pro-rata to the target beneficiaries.
9. Existing commitments	Unclaimed grants	Unclaimed grants	Allow to work through system. Re-negotiate at appropriate times in line with to-be-established criteria

Discussion Point	SDC	WCC	Suggestion Solution
10. Life of grant	With good mutually agreed reasons grant period (especially for construction related projects) may be extended for a number of years	Grants awarded must normally be claimed with 12 months. Extension of time may be given in exceptional circumstances.	Adopt WCC methodology
11. Retrospective funding	Grants may be awarded to pay costs already incurred	Grants will not be awarded to pay costs already incurred	Adopt WCC methodology This is the usual stipulation with most grant giving bodies
12. Grants to Parish Councils	Parish Councils are only eligible for grants for (a) Play Areas; or (b) Parish Plans	Will award grants to Parish Councils	
13. Private membership clubs	Private membership clubs are eligible for Community Grants.	Private membership clubs are not eligible for grants except for schemes available to general public	Adopt WCC methodology
14. Support for Projects	Does not commission work to meet priorities.	WBF & SIF commission projects to meet priorities identified by Area Committee	Adopt WCC methodology. Establish two funds: one for applications from the community (majority of funds) the second to support projects developed to address Joint Committee priorities.

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