

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Warwick Area Committee

Date of Committee 11 March 2008

Report Title Use of Area Committee Grants Funds 2008-09

Summary The report asks for the Committee's views on the use of Area Committee Grants Funds in 2008-09.

For further information please contact: Peter Hunter Area Manager peterhunter@warwickshire.gov.uk Nick Darwen Voluntary & Community Sector Relationships Manager nickdarwen@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members Area Committee funding sub-group, comprising Cllr. Boad, Cllr. Haywood and Cllr. Naylor.
- Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Legal Tony Maione, Solicitor
- Finance Nicola Cumberledge, Finance Officer
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority

Police

Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee

To Council

To Cabinet Area Committee views to be reported to Cabinet.....

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation

Agenda No

Warwick Area Committee – 11 March 2008

Use of Area Committee Grants Funds 2008-09

Report of the Strategic Director - Performance and Development

Recommendation:

That Members note the report and make recommendations to Cabinet as they see fit.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The County Council's recent Value For Money Review of Community Development included assessment of the management of Area Committee Grants Funds.
- 1.2 The report concluded that Area Committee Funds are efficiently managed and used to good affect in addressing both community needs and the County Council's strategic priorities.
- 1.3 Nevertheless, the report also identified a number of areas where improvements could be made, in particular to ensure:
 - processes for developing projects are transparent and consistently applied
 - processes for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on projects are robust and consistently applied
 - funds are flexible enough to address local needs in the most effective manner
 - where there are separate funding streams, there is a clear rationale for this
- 1.4 In order to implement the recommendations of the Value For Money Review, the Committee is asked for its views on the proposed recommendations below before they are considered by Cabinet.
- 1.5 The Committee is further asked to begin to consider how it may wish to operate its community grants funds for 2008-09 should these flexibilities be approved.

2. Recommendations for consideration by Area Committee emerging following the Value For Money Review (from 1st April 2008)

- 2.1 That each Area Committee holds a single Community Fund, replacing the existing Community Development Fund, Well-Being Fund and Social Inclusion Fund.
- 2.2 That each Committee is given the following flexibilities in the use of the Fund:
- To agree an appropriate allocation between (a) small grants for community-led initiatives to meet locally identified needs and (b) larger grants to meet local strategic priorities as agreed by the Committee
 - To align, 'pool' or supplement the Fund with other appropriate local funds so long as there are robust and agreed arrangements for management and accountability.
 - To develop local mechanisms to enhance the role of Locality Forums in deciding the use of funds (for instance through setting local priorities, or through 'ring-fencing' funds for each Locality).
 - To use the Fund to ensure the on-going viability of key community projects where appropriate, rather than necessarily for new and short-term initiatives.
- 2.3 That the Fund will be allocated to projects through open and transparent application processes, which are appropriate for the level of grant being awarded.
- 2.4 That the Fund will be subject to clear and consistent monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements which are appropriate for the level of grant awarded.
- 2.5 That during 2008-09 a thorough review of WCC grants is undertaken with a view to implementing the following changes from April 2009:
- Development of standardised processes, paperwork and 'gateways' to grants funds across the County Council; and 'merging' of funds where appropriate
 - Review of allocations of grants funds across the five Districts based on up-to-date socio-economic data to develop a consistent formula applicable to all County-wide grants funds that are devolved to District level.
 - Analysis of options regarding the future administration of grants funds across the County Council and other local public services in order to guarantee savings, best value, and best practice.

3. The Area Committee funding sub group's response to those recommendations and proposals for the use of the Area Committee Funds in the Warwick Area 2008-09

- 3.1 The funding sub-group of Warwick Area Committee met on 25 Feb. 2008 to consider options for the use of Warwick Area Committee funds in 2008/9. The sub-group considered the options set out in section 2 above and in the light of proposals for a fundamental review of funding in 2008/9, considered that it did not wish to propose major changes at this time. It did however wish to make the proposals set out below.

- 3.2 A figure in the order of £150,000 (exact figure still to be determined) will be available to Warwick Area Committee in 2008/9, comprising what has previously been allocated in the Community Development Fund, Social Inclusion Fund and the Well-Being Fund. Additionally some £22,524.74 will be carried over from 2007/8 (Well-Being fund £15,497.50 and Community Development fund £7,027.24), giving an available total of approximately £172,500. Of this, some £65,000 is committed to three major ongoing projects:
- Migrant Worker Support Post (see report on this agenda), £20,000
 - Contribution to Community Support Team (with Warwick District Council), £25,000
 - Contribution to CAB Local benefits advice project £20,000.

This leaves an available balance of some £107,500

- 3.3 The funding sub-group was of the view that in 2008/9, the Community Development Fund should operate in Warwick area as previously, and that £40,000 from the Area Committee's funds should be allocated for those purposes. The criteria for the use of the fund should be as in previous years and there should be a grant limit of £5,000. The funding sub group would wish the Area Committee to be able to adopt a timescale of its own choosing for advertising the fund and allocating grants in 2008/9, rather than this being linked to a County-wide process this year.

- 3.4 This would then leave a sum of some £67,500 in the single Community Fund (created by merging the Well-Being Fund and Social Inclusion Fund). The funding sub-group proposes that there should be 2 ways in which these funds can be used:

- a) Strategic Grants – Larger grants which meet the Area Committee's priorities (these may include local Sustainable Community Strategy priorities or LAA priorities at a local level). These grant proposals should be developed between partner organisations and the Area Office in consultation with the funding sub-group and reported to Area Committee for approval. There should be no cut off limit for such grants.
- b) Community Grants - These grants will be available to support small-scale initiatives which meet the County Council's objectives in the community. Organisations wishing to obtain funding from this source will be encouraged to discuss the proposals with their local County Councillor. It is anticipated that the majority of proposals for the use of these funds will be channelled through the County Councillors. This will enable Councillors to respond flexibly to the needs of the communities that they represent. It may be that County Councillors would wish to use these funds to support locality initiatives in their areas.

It is expected that these community grants would be up to £2,000 per grant. There would be no limit to the number of grants that any County Councillor could submit in any year, however, the funding position will be monitored by the funding sub-group who will impose restrictions if needed. Grant proposals

would be considered by the funding sub-group every 2 months and submitted to Area Committee for approval. Each grant proposal must show how it contributes to meeting the County Councils objectives.

- 3.5 It is not proposed that the Community Fund should be split between these two sub-headings, there should be a single pot which would be reviewed every 2 months by the funding sub-group, who would be in a position to make recommendations to Area Committee if needed.
- 3.6 In addition to the main funds discussed above, the Area Committee will also have available in 2008/9 £10,000 for Arts For Health projects as recently agreed by Council and £6,000 for activities which help to combat anti-social behaviour.

DAVID CARTER
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Development

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12 February 2008