



**South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council**

**REPORT TO:** Leader's Portfolio Meeting

27 November 2014

**LEAD OFFICER:** Director, Health and Environmental Services

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## **GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR: 6-MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT**

### **Purpose**

1. To examine the delivery of grant programmes funded by the Council during the first six months of 2014/15.
2. This not a key decision because it reviews expenditure within current budgets. It has been brought before the leader following agreement within the Grants Review of 2013.

### **Recommendations**

3. It is recommended that the Leader approves the continued provision of grant assistance to the current grant recipients issued through the Service Support Grant fund (subject to three year funding agreements) as agreed (Joint Portfolio Holders Meeting September 23 2013).
4. It is recommended that the Leader approves the opening of a further round of grant applications under the Community Transport theme of the Service Support Grant fund, providing a further £8,461 of additional support to the Community Transport sector this financial year.
5. It is recommended the Leader notes the delivery of all other grant programmes within the scope of this report, as currently delivered.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

6. The closed Capital Grants programme (Appendix 1) retained financial commitment to 23 projects at the beginning of the 2014/15 financial year. A further 6 projects have completed since 1 April 2014. For some applicants the search for match funding is still on-going, however, most are on a strong footing.
7. Regarding the open programmes (Appendix 2), the majority of organisations receiving grant support have delivered the agreed outputs to time and to budget, achieving the objectives of the individual grant programmes. All recipients are being actively monitored.
8. The three year programme of Service Support Grants (approved at the joint portfolio holder meeting 23 May 2013), saw the Community Transport strand of this grant fund undersubscribed by £3,626 in year 1 (13/14) and £4,835 in year 2 (14/15). It was agreed that these unallocated funds be held in reserve, in the light of reducing levels of subsidised bus services resulting from the on-going Cambridgeshire Future Transport review, with a view to offering further bidding rounds to Community Transport operators later in the three year program.

## Background

9. South Cambridgeshire District Council concluded its Grants Review in February 2013, a process first begun in 2011. As a result significant changes were introduced allowing a tighter focus on priorities, with grants and partnership funding arrangements simplified into six themes.
10. For each of the six themes lead responsibility was given to the respective Portfolio Holder (as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Background Paper, Leaders Portfolio Holders Meeting February 01 2013). These themes were:
  - (a) Supporting Parishes and Community Activities
  - (b) Voluntary Sector – Advice and other grants
  - (c) Sustainable Energy
  - (d) Housing and Independent Living
  - (e) Planning and Economic Development
  - (f) Young People
11. The scope of this report covers the outstanding payments from the closed Capital Grants programme, the transition arrangements to support community arts and the following on-going programmes:
  - (a) Supporting Parishes and Communities
    - (i) Community Chest
  - (b) Voluntary Sector – Advice and other grants
    - (i) Service Support Grants
      1. Generalist and Specialist Advice
      2. Community Transport
      3. Independent Living
      4. Support Parishes and Communities
      5. Homelessness Prevention
  - (c) Sustainable Energy
    - (i) Travel for Work and energy projects
  - (d) Housing and Independent Living
    - (i) Mortgage advice
    - (ii) Benefit Reform transition grant to CAB
    - (iii) Mobile Warden Scheme
  - (e) Planning and Economic Development
    - (i) Museum
    - (ii) Wildlife Enhancement
  - (f) Young people
    - (i) Young peoples partnership
    - (ii) Young peoples work
    - (iii) Elite Athletes grants programme

Out of scope: Home repairs (£100k); Disability Facilities Grant (£10k)

12. The maximum award for the Community Chest was increased from £1,000 to £1,500 in January 2014 following agreement at the Leader's Portfolio Meeting on 16 January 2014.

13. It was also agreed at the Leader's Portfolio Meeting on 16 January 2014 that the Youth Council review applications to the Community Chest benefitting 0-17 year olds and make recommendations to the Leader. This mechanism has now been applied, with the Youth Council considering the applications and subsequently making recommendations to the Leader.
14. On 17 July 2014 the Leader agreed to make decisions on future Community Chest applications at his Portfolio Holder Meetings. Applications were discussed in August and September.
15. The Independent Living theme of the Service Support Grant was underspent by £2,000 (Arts and Minds running only one of the two courses they had been supported to offer in year 1 of their grant agreement). With the approval of the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, this underspend was made available on 25 September 2014 to extend the Community Chest.
16. The three-year programme of Service Support Grants (approved at the joint portfolio holder meeting May 2013), saw the Community Transport strand of this grant fund undersubscribed by £3,626 in year 1 (13/14) and £4,835 in year 2 (14/15).
17. It was agreed that these unallocated funds be held in reserve, in the light of reducing levels of subsidised bus services resulting from the on-going Cambridgeshire Future Transport review, with a view to offering further bidding rounds to Community Transport operators later in the three year programme.

### **Considerations**

18. The now closed capital grants programme retains financial commitments to 15 projects currently being undertaken around the district. There are no significant issues affecting the progress of the remaining projects and these are anticipated to come in at the expected budget, with the possible exception of the Melbourn Play Parks Project (£2,120).
19. The grant programmes included in the Grants Review (set out in paragraph 7) are reported in detail in Appendix 2.
20. Intensified promotional effort and an increase in the maximum award has meant that demand for the Community Chest has grown and remained strong, resulting in the early closure on the scheme for this financial year. The scheme is advertised as being 'first come, first served'.
21. Possible further funding for the Community Chest in 2014/15 will be discussed as part of the Community Chest Report to the Leader's Portfolio Holder Meeting on 27 November 2014.
22. The under-subscribed Community Transport Service Support Grant fund stream for the current and previous financial year has a combined value of £8,461, which is sufficient to justify opening a new round of grant applications, for projects which can be completed within the existing three year programme.
23. The Cambridgeshire Future Transport review of subsidised bus services has achieved efficiencies, but services are likely to be further reduced as a result of the county's discussions on passenger transport services.

## **Options**

24. The Leader could approve, vary or discontinue with the current grant funding arrangements for the Service Support Fund (subject to three year funding agreements).

## **Implications**

25. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

## **Legal**

26. Arrangements are in place with grant recipients, which should be followed, if a variation or discontinuation of funding is agreed.

## **Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)**

27. The Strategic Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder is supportive of the proposal to open a further bidding round for the Community Transport strand of the three-year Service Support Grants.

## **Effect on Strategic Aims**

28. Ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents: the grant programmes promote a good quality of life for all residents, assisting directly or indirectly through voluntary organisations schemes which help overcome the challenges faced by residents imposed by age, infirmity, disability, low income or rurality.

## **Background Papers**

Leaders Portfolio Meeting 1 Feb 2013

<http://moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=883&MId=5969&Ver=4>

Joint Leader, Planning Policy and Localism and Environmental Services Portfolio Holders Meeting 23 May 2014

<http://moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=883&MId=6132&Ver=4>

Leaders Portfolio Meeting 16 Jan 2014

<http://moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=883&MId=6032&Ver=4>

Leaders Portfolio Meeting 17 July 2014

<http://moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=883&MId=6335&Ver=4>

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