

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

23 July 2015

**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 last 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 supported 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 the Leader notes the delivery of all other grant programmes within the scope of this report, as currently delivered.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

5. The closed Capital Grants programme (Appendix 1) retained financial commitment to 17 projects midway through the 2014/15 financial year.
6. Substantial progress has been made over the last six months by the projects supported by the Capital Grants programme. A further £117,239 of payments were made in the last two quarters, reducing the outstanding sum to £69,220.
7. Of the ten projects remaining open in the Capital Grants programme, all bar three projects are awaiting a completion certificate to enable the final payment. Of these three the projects that remain to be of concern are the Hardwick Scout Group's new community building (the group has not been forthcoming about the progress made with the project) and the Melbourn Play Parks Project (no recent communication has been received).
8. 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.

### **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 applications of interest 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.
15. On 11 March 2015 the Leader agreed amendments to the Community Chest eligibility criteria, removing the parish paths scheme and also agreed to carry forward the additional £20,000 allocated to the Community Chest by Cabinet 12 February.
16. 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.
17. 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). 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.
18. The under-subscribed Community Transport Service Support Grant fund stream for the first two years of the programme had a combined value of £8,461, which was deemed sufficient to justify opening a new round of grant applications, for projects which could be completed within the existing three year programme. A further round of applications was held at the Leader's agreement and funds distributed following a competitive bidding process. Activity supported by these additional grants is reported in Appendix 2, along with the pre-existing grants.

### **Considerations**

19. The now closed capital grants programme retains financial commitments to ten 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).
20. The grant programmes included in the Grants Review (set out in paragraph 7) are reported in detail in Appendix 2.
21. Intensified promotional effort, including by elected members, and an increase in the maximum award has meant that demand for the Community Chest grew and remained strong throughout the remainder of 2014/15, resulting in the early closure on the scheme for that financial year. The scheme was advertised as being 'first come, first served'.
22. Further funding for the Community Chest in 2014/15 was discussed as part of the Community Chest Report to the Leader's Portfolio Holder Meeting on 27 November 2014, with a further £10,000 vired into the fund.
23. The Community Chest received a further boost of £20,000 (decision, paper) and as a result the fund as since re-opened as of 1 April 2015 with a combined value of £72,000.

## **Options**

24. The Leader could approve, vary or discontinue the current grant funding arrangements for the Service Support Grant Fund (subject to three year funding agreements).
25. To note the delivery of all other grant programmes within the scope of this report, as currently delivered.
26. Following the October and January grant rounds of Elite Athletes fund the fund was underspent by £14,400 due to fewer than expected athletes coming forward for support. The underspend in the Elite Athletes fund was vired to provide additional support to the Citizens Advice Bureaux during the current financial year, given the increasing demand evident for their services (Environmental Services Portfolio Holder meeting, 25 February 2015 plus virement signed by the Leader and The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder in April 2015).

## **Implications**

27. 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***

28. 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)**

29. None.

## **Effect on Strategic Aims**

30. 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>

Cabinet, 12 February 2015

<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=293&MIId=6280&Ver=4>

Environmental Services Portfolio Holder Meeting 25 February 2015

<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=868&MIId=6510&Ver=4>

Leaders Portfolio Meeting 11 March 2015

<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s79459/Community%20Chest%20Eligibility%20Report%20110315.pdf>

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