

<b>Subject:</b>	Allocation of Rossendale Council Grant for 2011-2013		<b>Status:</b>	For Publication	
<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet		<b>Date:</b> 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2011		
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Customers and Communities		<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Communities and Neighbourhoods	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Forward Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Special Urgency	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Community Impact Assessment:</b>	Required:	Yes	Attached:	Yes	
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment</b>	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
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1.	<b>RECOMMENDATION(S)</b>
1.1	That Cabinet note the late entry of the Credit Union's application and the view of the Grants Advisory Working Group and supports the working group's recommendation to accept it as a valid application.
1.2	That Cabinet approve Rossendale Council Grant funding for 2011-2013 to those organisations / groups identified by the Grants Advisory Working Group as detailed in <u>Appendix 1</u> .
1.3	The Council's financial position will continue to be challenging. Cabinet therefore recommend that those organisations and groups in receipt of three year funding be subject to the standard clause that their proposed allocation for 2012 and 2013 is reviewed as part of the Council's Annual Budget setting process.
1.4	That Discretionary Rate Relief is awarded as outlined in <u>Appendix 2</u> and a revised protocol for allocating discretionary rate relief is reviewed in 2011-2012 with any changes introduced in 2012 - 2013.
1.5	That Cabinet ask Overview and Scrutiny – Policy to review the revised grant process and assess 'What Worked Well...What Didn't Work So Well'.
1.6	That all future minor amendments to the grants process be delegated to the Director of Customers and Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To seek Cabinet approval on the proposed allocation of Rossendale Council Grant for the next three years: 2011- 2013.

### 3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **A clean and green Rossendale** – creating a better environment for all
- **A healthy and successful Rossendale** – supporting vibrant communities and a strong economy
- **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services

### 4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- 4.1 Not issuing grant funding via robust, open and transparent criteria could open the process to challenge by those making or wishing to make an application.
- 4.2 The grant funding criteria is designed to ensure that councillors have information which will support responsible financial management through the allocation of grant funding against the Council's priorities. Having a flawed process could undermine this principle.

### 5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 On 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011 Cabinet approved the amalgamation of a number of its funding pots including Grants to Outside Bodies, Neighbourhood Forum Community Grant, Neighbourhood Forum Events Grant and the discretionary relief the Council provides to those charities who are awarded National Non Domestic Rating Relief.

The Council amalgamated these grants into two distinctive funding streams:

- A one or three year 'Rossendale Council Grant' giving organisations / groups the opportunity to demonstrate they provide a service or function that delivers against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan and/or the Neighbourhood Action Plans.
- A Neighbourhood Forum fund that gives members of the Forum the opportunity to allocate resources to either a project or a grant that assists in the delivery of priorities in the Neighbourhood Forum Action Plan.

5.2 The refreshed Rossendale grant process opened on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011 and closed at noon on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Applicants could apply for a three or one year grant. In total the Council received 53 grant applications requesting a total sum of £398,594 in 2011, £337,008 in 2012, £331,362 in 2013.

## Grant Advisory Working Group

- 5.3 The Grant Advisory Working Group comprised of 6 Councillors reflecting the political balance of the Council. The group was observed and supported by an independent member of Overview and Scrutiny, a representative of the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships and council officers.
- 5.4 The role of the six councillors was to assess and score the 53 grant applications against a criteria and scoring matrix and make recommendations to Cabinet. Each of the 9 questions on the application form was awarded a score between 1 and 5 which was then multiplied by a weighting given to each question. The maximum score each application could be awarded was 100.
- 5.5 The 6 councillors independently scored each of the 53 applications. The individual scores were added up and divided by 6 to provide an average score for each application. The applications were then ranked in order from 1 – 53.
- 5.6 Having taken account of the funding ring fenced for the payment of Discretionary Rate Relief awarded to 63 community groups / organisations (see [Appendix 2](#)) the working group then worked down the applications from 1 to 53 awarding funding until the budget was allocated. The group's recommendations can be viewed at [Appendix 1](#).
- 5.7 Those organisations /groups that successfully secured a grant have been made aware that the 'Transition Funding' they received for Q1 2011 – 2012 will be subtracted from their allocation in year 2011 – 2012. Those organisations / groups that were unsuccessful and have been allocated 'Transition Funding' for Q1 2011 – 2012 will receive no further payment.
- 5.8 The Grant Advisory Working Group found the assessment of each application both challenging and highly rewarding. They found reading through the 53 applications gave an insight into the tremendous amount of voluntary and community work that takes place throughout the valley. They were particularly impressed with the quality of the applications which was very high and which presented a difficult test for the group to allocate funding against the total amount requested.
- 5.9 The working group would like to place on record their gratitude to all the applicants for expressing an interest and sincerely wish that their organisation / group go from strength to strength. Councillors strongly emphasised the importance of keeping in touch with each other irrelevant of whether or not they were successful to discuss how the Council and its partners can support and work more closely together.
- 5.10 **Note for Cabinet:**
1. The Grant Advisory Working Group would like to emphasise to Cabinet that they were made aware of a late grant application entry from the Credit Union. All applicants were advised of the closing date and time of 12 noon on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The Credit Union application was received via email at 17.12 on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011 with an apology for its lateness due to technical problems with their email account.
  2. The Grant Advisory Working Group took the decision to accept the Credit Union application but wanted Cabinet to be aware of this as they recognised that they may choose a different course of action.

## **COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

### **6. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 6.1 The financial implications arising from the recommendations will be contained within existing budget resources.

### **7. MONITORING OFFICER**

- 7.1 It is important that the Council has a robust grant funding process in place able to withstand scrutiny and challenge.

### **8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)**

- 8.1 No Human Resources implications arising from the report.

### **9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

- 9.1 From the outset community groups and organisations previously in receipt of council grant funding and those we hold on our community database have been engaged in all aspects of the refreshed grant allocation process.
- 9.2 An independent peer review was conducted by Help Direct and Burnley Borough Council.
- 9.3 The Portfolio Holder, Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny – Policy and Senior Management Team have all endorsed the revised grants process.

### **10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 The one clear message you could extract from the significant number of grant applications the Council received is that Rossendale has a vibrant and diverse third sector.
- 10.2 The Council recognise the invaluable contribution that the third sector makes to society in Rossendale and how on a daily basis they are making a significant difference to the lives of people in their community.
- 10.3 The Council's support to the third sector does not start and finish with the distribution of grant funding. Councillors and Officers support and work alongside hundreds of community groups and individuals who neither request nor receive funding from the Council. This joint working is not measured in pure financial terms; it is about recognising that true partnerships are formed by continuing to engage with each other in more innovative and supportive ways.

Background Papers

Document	Place of Inspection
Grant Advisory Working Group recommendations	Appendix 1
Discretionary Rate Relief	Appendix 2
13 <sup>th</sup> March 2011 Cabinet report on Community Grant Funding – Refreshed procedures	<a href="http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/site/scripts/meetings_info.php?meetingID=540">http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/site/scripts/meetings_info.php?meetingID=540</a>