



REPORT TO:	COUNCIL
DATE:	5 SEPTEMBER 2013
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE JULIAN RUDD
TITLE OF REPORT:	COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report outlines the priorities for the establishment of a new community grant scheme including eligibility criteria, intervention rates and approval processes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members approve the implementation of a new Community Grant Scheme for 2013/2014 of £50k, financed from the Council's General Reserve, with grant criteria as outlined in the report (para 6.3).

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure that Council is able to support community-based activities and facilities in Ryedale.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 The risk of not implementing a new scheme is that the community sector in Ryedale may not be able to develop community projects and facilities that contribute positively to the wellbeing of the area.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Council Aim 4: To have active communities where everyone feels welcome and safe.
- 5.2 Consultation with Commissioning Board group representatives has been undertaken.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 Following a report to Commissioning Board in June 2013, Members resolved:

'That Members support in principle the establishment of a new Community Grant budget and that the Head of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Chairman of the Commissioning Board and Commissioning Board group representatives, devise the criteria (this will include the maximum amount to be allocated to any group and the need for any match funding to be applied to any grant requests) and consider the resource requirements and an officer report is presented for approval to Council on the 5 September.' (Minute 11 refers)

6.2 This recommendation arose from consideration of the report which highlighted –

- The Council currently has no budgetary provision for general grant funding to the voluntary and community sector for capital or revenue projects (the funding allocations at Annex A are commissions of established community, sports and creative economy organisations to provide specified services).
- The lack of any budgetary allocation for general community grants is not consistent with the role the Council could play in supporting a sustainable voluntary and community sector as recommended by the Scrutiny Committee or with the Council's aim to have safe and active communities outlined in the Council's Sports and Active Lives Strategy.
- There continues to be a high level of demand for support from the sector. Over 40 requests for funding have already been received in the six months since the final allocation from the Community Investment Fund in March 2013.

6.3 The Chair of the Commissioning Board and Group representatives (Councillors Arnold, Clark and Keal, apologies from Cllr Walker) met on 25 July to discuss the development of the grant scheme. This meeting supported the following proposals:

Budget:

- A budget of £50,000 be established in 2013/14 (subject to funding being available).

Use of Grant:

- Community facilities (including maintenance and enhancement of those community facilities activities or functions that demonstrably benefit the community e.g. festivals, events)

Maximum amount per grant:

- £5,000 maximum grant – with scope to increase in exceptional circumstances.
- For funding requests of up to £1,000, a 100% intervention rate could be employed (i.e. a full project costs grant) at the discretion of the Commissioning Board.
- For funding requests of above £1,000 a maximum of 25% intervention (a quarter of total project cost) will be applied in normal circumstances with an ability to go above 25% in exceptional circumstances.

Applicants:

- Voluntary and community groups are eligible to apply, (including social enterprises) by completing an application form. Businesses, individuals, parish / town councils or other organisations with tax raising powers will not be eligible.

Application Process:

- An officer of RDC or Ryedale Voluntary Action would contact the applicant either before or after the application is received to offer advice and support through the process, and to seek any additional clarification on the projects, prior to undertaking a project appraisal and making a recommendation. For grants of up to £250, only a very light-touch assessment is required.
- The relevant ward member(s) will be consulted on each site specific application.

- The Chair and group representatives from Commissioning Board will meet to agree the recommendations prior to them going to Commissioning Board for approval.
- For 2013/14 year there will be two meetings; November 2013 and March 2014.
- Up to 50% of the total grant budget (i.e. £25,000 of the proposed £50,000 budget) will be available for allocation at the first meeting. (Projects can be carried forward to the next meeting if there is insufficient funding available.)

Funding Issues

- 6.4 The funding issues around this proposal need to be considered by Members. Annex A to this report identifies the existing funding within the 2013/2014 budget and the extent to which these funds are committed / spent. The commissioning of the 'Creative Economy' spend was finalised by the Commissioning Board in its report on the 21 March 2013.
- 6.5 As can be seen by the analysis, the vast majority of the funding is already paid or committed. To establish a new community grants fund the Council will therefore need to consider either use of other budgets or the use of Council reserves.
- 6.6 As members will be aware the 2013/2014 budget had an 'unallocated provision' of £105k included within it. So far allocations against this budget are as follows:
- £15.5k Milton Rooms Option Appraisal and Business Plan (Commissioning Board 14 February 2013 background).
 - £15k estimate – Funding for Company that seeks to minimise empty properties, and thereby increase future years New Homes Bonus Grant. The company takes a fee equivalent to 35% of the year 1 NHB allocation.
 - £10k Tour De France staging cost contribution.
- 6.7 There is therefore c£65k remaining within the unallocated provision which could be used towards this new grants budget. However, members should be aware that there are unbudgeted costs facing the Council in the current year.
- 6.8 The East Heslerton Wind Farm Public Enquiry will require the Council to procure expert planning, landscape and legal advice with associated costs on the Council. The current estimate is c£50k, with the final figure very much dependent on the duration of the enquiry. This figure excludes any cost awards against the Council from the Enquiry, which may be made.
- 6.9 Members will be aware that the budget for 2013/14 did not include any draw on general balances to balance the budget. Members could therefore consider the Improvement Contingency and Emergency Fund (£147k) or General Reserve (£596k) as potential sources of funding for this one off budget. The Council's minimum criteria for its General Reserve is 5% of the Net Revenue Budget, which presently equates to £359k.
- 6.10 Taking the above into account should members want to establish a New Community Activities Grant Scheme for 2013/2014 only it is recommended that the funding is provided from the Council's General Reserve. Members can consider future year funding of such grants as part of the 2014/2015 budget strategy process.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following implications have been identified:
- a) Financial

There is no budgetary provision for the establishment of a new community grant scheme in 2013/14. It is recommended that the scheme is funded from the unallocated reserves.

- b) Legal
Applications for grant aid will be on the official application form and applicants will agree to the terms and conditions of each grant prior to funding being awarded.
- c) Other
None

8.0 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 If approved, the Economy and Community team will publicise the proposed scheme and the first date of Commissioning Board approvals will be 21 November 2013.

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Background Papers:

Voluntary and Community Sector Review

<http://democracy.ryedale.gov.uk/documents/s12107/1%20Part%20A%20-%20Chairman%20of%20O%20and%20S%20-%20Support%20for%20VCS%20Scrutiny%20Review%202012%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Creative Economy Commissioning – 2013/14 Commissions

<http://democracy.ryedale.gov.uk/documents/s13347/1Part%20A%20-%20HEI%20-%20Creative%20Economy%20Commission%20201314%20Commissions%20Report.pdf>

Ryedale Citizens Advice Bureau Commissioning

<http://democracy.ryedale.gov.uk/documents/s13350/2Part%20A%20-%20HPH%20-%20Ryedale%20CAB%20Review.pdf>