

Record of Cabinet portfolio holder decision

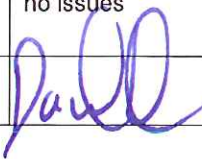
Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

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| Decision made by | Councillor Elaine Ware |
| Key decision? | Yes |
| Date of decision (same as date form signed) | |
| Name and job title of officer requesting the decision | Jayne Bolton, Grants Team Leader |
| Officer contact details | Tel: 01235 422437 Email: Jayne.bolton@southandvale.gov.uk |
| Decision | <p>To approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a four year partnership grant of £384,763 to Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice Bureau (S&V CAB) - £103,714 for 2017/18, £98,528, in 2018/19, £93,601 in 2019/20 and £88,920 in 2020/21 subject to the Council agreeing the budget at its annual budget setting meetings • a one year partnership grant of £57,825 for 2017/18 to Wantage Independent Advice Centre (WIAC) • a one year partnership grant of £8,250 for 2017/18 to Community First (previously ORCC) • a one year partnership grant of £800 for 2017/18 to The Albert Memorial Abingdon Trust. |
| Reasons for decision | <p>The council has a budget of £175,600 available in 2017/18 to renew any existing partnership grants. The current recipients requested a total of £207,764.</p> <p>Within the budget available for 2017/18 the council can offer the above organisations the same amount of funding they have been receiving for a number of years (totalling £170,589) and also save £5,011.</p> <p>The rationale behind each award is:</p> <p>Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice Bureau</p> <p>The S&V CAB requested a four-year partnership grant starting with £103,714 in 2017/18 and reducing by five per</p> |

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| | <p>cent each year thereafter.</p> <p>The S&V CAB has a strong financial track record and its request demonstrates a commitment to reducing its reliance on council funding. A four-year grant, albeit subject to the council agreeing its budget each year, will provide some financial security to the S&V CAB.</p> <p>The service is available across the whole district from premises in Abingdon.</p> <p>Wantage Independent Advice Centre</p> <p>The WIAC requested a four-year partnership grant of £380,000 (£95,000 per year), representing a 64 per cent increase on their previous grant of £57,825 per year.</p> <p>A grant of £57,825 is consistent with previous years' funding and awarding a grant for one year only will allow a full review of WIAC's services and finances to take place to fully understand what the extra funding would provide and how it would relate to the CAB's work</p> <p>The service is based in Wantage and current users are from the Wantage and Grove area so there is potentially overlap with the S&V CAB.</p> <p>Community First Oxfordshire</p> <p>CFO provides advice to our rural communities on creating, protecting and supporting facilities such as village halls, shops and pubs. Officers proposed a one-year partnership grant of £8,250 towards continuing these activities in 2017/18, which is consistent with previous years.</p> <p>The Albert Memorial Abingdon Trust</p> <p>The council is tied into a charitable trust agreement until 2021. The agreement includes an annual contribution to the memorial's maintenance fund.</p> <p>The annual contribution is set at their AGM each March. It has been £800 since 2011 and we don't expect this to change significantly in 2017/18 therefore, officers proposed a 2017/18 partnership grant of £800.</p> |
| <p>Alternative options rejected</p> | <p>Awarding the grants requested of £207,764 and foregoing the potential £5,011 saving would result in a £32,164 overspend due to WIAC's increased request. However, without a clear business case from the WIAC for this additional funding the council risks funding services that don't contribute to its corporate objectives or that the CAB currently provides.</p> |

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| | <p>Rejected the proposal to offer WIAC a four year grant that reduced each year, because of concerns around their business case and financial position. However agreed that officers will work with WIAC to develop a robust business case for a longer term grant.</p> <p>Stopping these grants, with the exception of the Albert Memorial, which we are committed to until 2021, would cause serious operational difficulties for the S&V CAB and WIAC as they are both heavily dependent on the council's funding and have been for many years.</p> |
| <p>Legal implications</p> | <p>S&V CAB - External legal advice around the state aid regulations confirmed that whilst S&V CAB will receive more than the De Minimis amount of state aid over the four-year period it would be exempt as the grant is to provide non-economic advisory services to residents on a non-discriminatory basis.</p> <p>WIAC – State aid only applies to economic activity and there is a strong argument that WIAC's activities are not economic. Not least because it does not charge a fee for advice and that donations are provided for transport services rather than a set charge. All services are provided on a non-discriminatory basis. A number of additional provisions will be included in the grant agreement based on legal advice received.</p> <p>CFO - In the absence of any detailed information and in order to protect the position of the council any funding should be provided as De Minimis aid and the organisation notified of this in writing.</p> <p>Albert Memorial – The council is one of three organisations operating the Albert Memorial Trust and part of the Trust Agreement requires an annual maintenance contribution from each organisation, which is agreed at each AGM.</p> |
| <p>Financial implications</p> | <p>The council agreed a budget of £185,600 for partnership grants in 2017/18, of which £10,000 is already committed to Abingdon Museum, leaving a balance of £175,600 towards other partnership grants.</p> <p>All future grant awards will also be subject to annual approval of the revenue grants budget by full council.</p> |
| <p>Other implications</p> | <p>There are some risks associated with this type of grant funding.</p> <p>In order to minimise these risks all organisations must enter into a formal grant agreement with the council. The agreements will set out performance targets for each organisations.</p> <p>We will pay the grants over £10,000 in two stages, one at the</p> |

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| | <p>start of the financial year, and a second six months later.</p> <p>Officers will not release any payments until they are satisfied with the monitoring information from the organisations.</p> <p>The grant agreement includes financial penalties for missed deadlines and poor performance.</p> |
| Background papers considered | S&V CAB and WIAC grant proposals. |
| Declarations/conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/officer consulted by the Cabinet member? | |

| List consultees | Name | Outcome | Date |
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| Ward councillors | All ward councillors – | Received 16 responses- 12 in favour and four against offering WIAC a one year grant only. Requested a four year grant that reduced each year in line with the CAB grant. | 6/4/2017 |
| Legal | Deirdre Smith | Agreed subject to comments shown in the legal implications section. | 23/3/2017 |
| Finance | Simon Hewings William Jacobs | Approved Approved | 29/3/2017 30/3/2017 |
| Human resources | n/a | | |
| Sustainability | n/a | | |
| Diversity and equality | Cheryl Reeves Sent for comment on 16 March comment by 23 March | With the exception Albert memorial. These organisations provide a valuable service to vulnerable people which in turn helps the councils to deliver against our corporate equality objectives. | 28/3/2017 |
| Communications | Shona Ware | no issues | 27/3/2016 |
| Chief Executive | David Hill |  | 7/04/2017 |
| Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt category? | No | | |

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

| For Democratic Services office use only | | |
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| Form received | Date: 7-4-17 | Time: 10:00 |
| Date published to all councillors | Date: 7-4-17 | |
| Call-in deadline | Date: 18-4-17 | Time: 17:00 |

Guidance notes

1. This form must be completed by the lead officer who becomes the contact officer. The lead officer is responsible for ensuring that the necessary internal consultees have signed it off, including the chief executive. The lead officer must then seek the Cabinet portfolio holder's agreement and signature.
2. Once satisfied with the decision, the Cabinet portfolio holder must sign and date the form and return it to the lead officer who should send it to Democratic Services immediately to allow the call-in period to commence. Tel. 01235 540306 or extension 7306.
Email: democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk
3. Democratic Services will then publish the decision to the website (unless it is confidential) and send it to all councillors to commence the call-in period (five clear working days). The decision cannot be implemented until the call-in period expires. The call-in procedure can be found in the council's constitution, part 4, under the Scrutiny Committee procedure rules.
4. Before implementing the decision, the lead officer is responsible for checking with Democratic Services that the decision has not been called in.
5. If the decision has been called in, Democratic Services will notify the lead officer and decision-maker. This call-in puts the decision on hold.
6. Democratic Services will liaise with the Scrutiny Committee chairman over the date of the call-in debate. The Cabinet portfolio holder will be requested to attend the Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer the committee's questions.
7. The Scrutiny Committee may:
 - refer the decision back to the Cabinet portfolio holder for reconsideration or
 - refer the matter to Council with an alternative set of proposals (where the final decision rests with full Council) or
 - accept the Cabinet portfolio holder's decision, in which case it can be implemented immediately.

