

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Head of Communities	Report Number: M86
To: Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee	Date of meeting: 25 September 2012

REVIEW OF BABERGH'S DISCRETIONARY GRANTS SCHEME 2011/2012

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This annual report provides an overview of the activity funded under the Council's Community Grants Scheme in 2011/2012 and sets out future plans for the scheme in broad terms.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the contents of the report be noted, subject to any comments which the Committee may wish to make as a result of its consideration.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report, which provides a description of activity that was funded within the Council's budgeted expenditure for 2011/12 and 2012/13.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 This report is most closely linked to the Council's Significant Business Risk No. 9, Management of Major Programmes and Projects. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or impact	Mitigation Measures
Risks are associated with not having adequate monitoring in place to ensure that all grants are made in accordance with agreed criteria, meet the Council's strategic priorities and represent value for money.	Low	Medium – poor targeting of scarce Council resources	Adoption of an adequate policy, keeping tight budget control, close and regular monitoring and reporting of activity and outcomes to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Any future reduction in grant aid has unintended and serious consequences for the organisations involved.	Medium	Medium	Close consultation with recipients and targeted approach to any reductions.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 There has been close and ongoing consultation with existing grant recipients about previous reductions in the Community Grant Scheme during both 2010/11 and 2011/12. Consultation with groups that are not currently funded and who would benefit from funding to provide services in line with the Council's strategic priorities has also been undertaken but on a low-key, word of mouth basis in order not to stimulate demand that cannot be met.

6. Equality Analysis

- 6.1 In terms of impact, a number of equality groups were adversely affected by reductions in grant aid in both 2010/11 and 2011/12. The impact of the reducing grant funding programme is monitored on an ongoing basis. The main mitigation measures have been around supporting the development and fundraising efforts of groups to become more self-sufficient. While this has helped to reduce the impact of the Council's grant reductions it cannot completely replace the confidence and security that longer-term financial support from the local council provides.

7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 7.1 The two existing grants and community development teams of Babergh and Mid Suffolk are in the process of coming together as a single Operational Delivery Team (ODT), which will be in place by April 2013. This team will continue to manage two separate budgets for each Council and will manage the schemes in line with the policies that exist.
- 7.2 One of the first tasks for the new team will be to develop a joint grants policy and allocation process and seek approval from both Councils to run the new arrangement from 2013/14. It is anticipated that the new grants scheme will change the way that community groups are supported in their development to better reflect the new aligned priorities of the two Council's and the demands and opportunities created by changes to the external environment.
- 7.3 The focus is likely to be on encouraging and supporting volunteering and creating the conditions in which active communities can thrive. Suffolk benefits from over 67,000 volunteers but there are costs associated with their involvement. They need coordination, professional advice, training, materials, insurance and transport. They need to be inspired and encouraged to give their time to benefit communities. A coordinated approach to supporting this by both BDC and MSDC will help further enable the enormous contribution that individuals and organisations make to their communities.

8. Key Information

Background

- 8.1 Babergh's existing Community Grants Scheme is a discretionary funding area made up of a wide range of grants from as little as £150 to over £50,000, with over 35 organisations assisted each year. The recipients are varied; from a new dishwasher for a lunch club to revenue support for the CAB.
- 8.2 Revenue funding falls into two broad categories – core funding for ongoing services and responsive grants towards annual activity. Babergh has funded, for example, CAB services in Sudbury and Ipswich, projects that support and sustain biodiversity and countryside activities, umbrella organisations providing infrastructure support to local projects, services for vulnerable groups, a project providing support for ethnic minorities, arts projects, a theatre, youth projects, lunch clubs, and sports and inclusion activities.

- 8.3 The arrangements for the grant aid schemes range from capital improvements to facilities to revenue contributions towards core costs. The Council's Grant Aid schemes, in all their forms, provide a vital lifeline that supports the community and voluntary sector. The organisations that receive support from these schemes often work with the most vulnerable people in our society. Through supporting local charities and non profit organisations the council is able to access knowledge and expertise that it does not hold, which enables the provision of services to its citizens that it would be unable to provide directly.
- 8.4 Stimulating and supporting community activity through grant funding is a cost effective and socially useful way of delivering services and Babergh has a strong track record in this area. The grants schemes are linked to the strong community development focus of the Council and are interwoven with key services such as sport, leisure, culture, young people's activities, rural development, economic growth and tourism. As such, grant funding is an inherent part of the complete community development offering of the Council.
- 8.5 The current schemes were launched in 2008/09. It was important then because it was the first time that the allocation of discretionary funding was linked with the Council's Strategic Plan. It also streamlined the process for applicants, who previously had up to 16 different ways of applying for grant aid in Babergh. The system has been under significant pressure in more recent years though and has seen reductions in budget for each of the last four years.

Current Grants Policy

- 8.6 The Grants policy applies to grant funding partners and voluntary and community groups for delivering services that are not strictly statutory activities for the council but do contribute towards achievement of the Council's priorities. Grant funded projects must be providing benefits to Babergh residents and need to provide match funding for Babergh's contribution. The policy is supported by application forms and guidance notes for applicants. All groups applying for grant aid are assessed, through the information provided on the application form and supporting documents. The degree that projects contribute towards one or more strategic objectives weighs into the decision process, as does whether they are capable of delivering and recording outputs, the extent of match funding they are bringing into the district from other funders, and the extent to which they are open access. All groups receiving funding must be properly constituted and run on a sound financial basis.

Revenue funding 2011/12

- 8.7 Details of all grant recipients and the activity for which funding was granted are shown in Appendix 1. All funding went towards activity that provided benefits to Babergh residents. Although some projects supported delivery across the County, the contribution made by Babergh supported work in the Babergh area. Much of the revenue funding was for long standing arrangements with local agencies and partnerships that continue to deliver activities that support strategic objectives.
- 8.8 Due to the reductions that the grant schemes have faced over recent years no new groups or organisations received funding last year. It is not intended to seek applications from new groups going forward unless further funding becomes available from external sources or there is a radical change in the priorities of the Council that necessitates the ending of any existing arrangements that would no longer contribute towards objectives.
- 8.9 The Community Grant Aid scheme needs to evolve to keep pace with the changing external environment. This means an increase in capacity building and partnership working, and has already led to a move away from general infrastructure support towards supporting local partnership initiatives supporting vulnerable communities. This slight redirection has been quite subtle but has been a response to the increasing difficulties that groups have faced due to cuts from other sources and other changes in the environment including welfare reform and changes to funding agreements.

- 8.10 The current environment has caused significant problems for groups in sustaining themselves. Reductions in grant funding from the County Council, combined with the loss of some central government funding, has created difficulties for groups in sustaining their core funding. To compound these difficulties, many local trusts and charities lost income when the recession reduced the value of their investments. This has made it more difficult for the sector to step in and support projects that have suffered reductions in government or local authority funding.
- 8.11 Information relating to the total amount allocated to different areas of activity, related to strategic themes, is shown in Appendix 2.

Revenue Funding 2012/13

- 8.12 The budget for 2012/13 has been allocated in accordance with the criteria identified in para 8.6 above. No new applications were invited so previous recipients of revenue funding have received an allocation similar in nature to previous years agreements. During the remainder of this financial year there will be a review of Community Grant Aid, as part of the integration with Mid Suffolk, with the aim of achieving alignment of processes and procedures. It will also fundamentally review the organisations that have received historic funding and explore the extent to which they continue to meet the priorities of the Council's. It is hoped that a new integrated scheme will be designed and proposals presented to BDC and MSDC Members towards the end of this financial year for implementation in 2013/14 onwards.
- 8.13 Babergh's Community Grant Aid schemes have been reduced each year for the past four financial years (as illustrated by the graph at Appendix 3). Many long standing partner organisations have been adversely affected by these budget reductions, coming as they have at a time when other sources of funding have also been reduced. It is hoped that this downward trend can be halted given the staff savings that the Community Development function has absorbed as part of integration.

Quay Theatre

- 8.14 Following detailed reviews of the financial stability and management of the Quay Theatre over recent years, and the reduction in grant aid from £51,000 to £36,000 last year, there have been significant changes in the way the Theatre is managed. The voluntary management structure is still bedding in and has been closely monitored by Babergh officers. There have been changes to staffing structures, increases in volunteer opportunities, improved programming and changes to charging structures, all of which are moving things in the right direction. It is still not possible to fully gauge the longer term success of these changes but the enthusiasm and commitment to making it a success are evident and there have been serious efforts to address public relations, advertising, programming and fundraising.

CAB

- 8.15 The recipient of the largest single revenue contribution from the Grant Aid schemes is Sudbury and District CAB. The grant is used to pay staff salaries and administration costs. It enables the employment of 3.5 paid members of staff who support the work of over 45 volunteers. The CAB have experienced increased demand for services and headline issues relating to welfare benefits and debt make up over 55% of client enquiries. The CAB are an excellent example of a service provider whose interventions can help save the Council money in the longer term. A single homeless family can give rise to District Council costs of over £15,000, for example, but through advice and support from the CAB they can often help avoid this situation arising.

- 8.16 The longer term funding position will be assessed as part of the wider grants review. It is hoped that we will be in a position to provide some longer term funding security to organisations including the Quay and CAB to offer greater stability for forward planning. There is member involvement in the CAB (Cllr's Osborne and Deakin), the Quay Theatre (Cllr Hurren), the AONB's (Cllr's Bamford, Holbrook and Rose) and the Greenways Project (Cllr Jones). Those members will be engaged as part of this wider process.

Capital funding 2011/12

- 8.17 A total of £116,042 capital funding was allocated during 2011/12, including £25,000 towards kitchen and toilet facilities at The Ansell Centre, £15,000 towards play equipment at Elmsett and £15,500 to Shotley Parish Council for purchase of land at Shotley Cliff to create a heritage project including reinstatement of a footpath. Details of all the funded projects are included at Appendix 4.
- 8.18 We have funded improvements at seven village and community halls and four play areas. We have also funded information boards and biodiversity trail boards, office and IT equipment for charitable groups to use, improvements to sports facilities, hedge / tree planting and land purchases for community woodlands. All of these projects contribute towards the Council's strategic objectives.

9. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) update

- 9.1 Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council are developing an approach to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which can be implemented in each District. A joint project team is in place with the objective of having a CIL in operation in each district by March 2014. Income received through the planning system will be used to complement Grant Aid schemes, particularly for capital improvements to community facilities such as village halls, community centres and sports pitches.

10. Appendices

Title	Location
1. Revenue funding 2011/12	Attached
2. Revenue Funding 2011/12 related to strategic themes	Attached
3. Revenue Grants Budget 2009 - 13	Attached
4. Capital funding 2012/13	Attached

Authorship:
Tom Barker
Corporate Manager – Strong Communities
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils – Working Together
t: 01449 724647
e: tom.barker@midsuffolk.gov.uk
w: www.babergh.gov.uk www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

Appendix 1

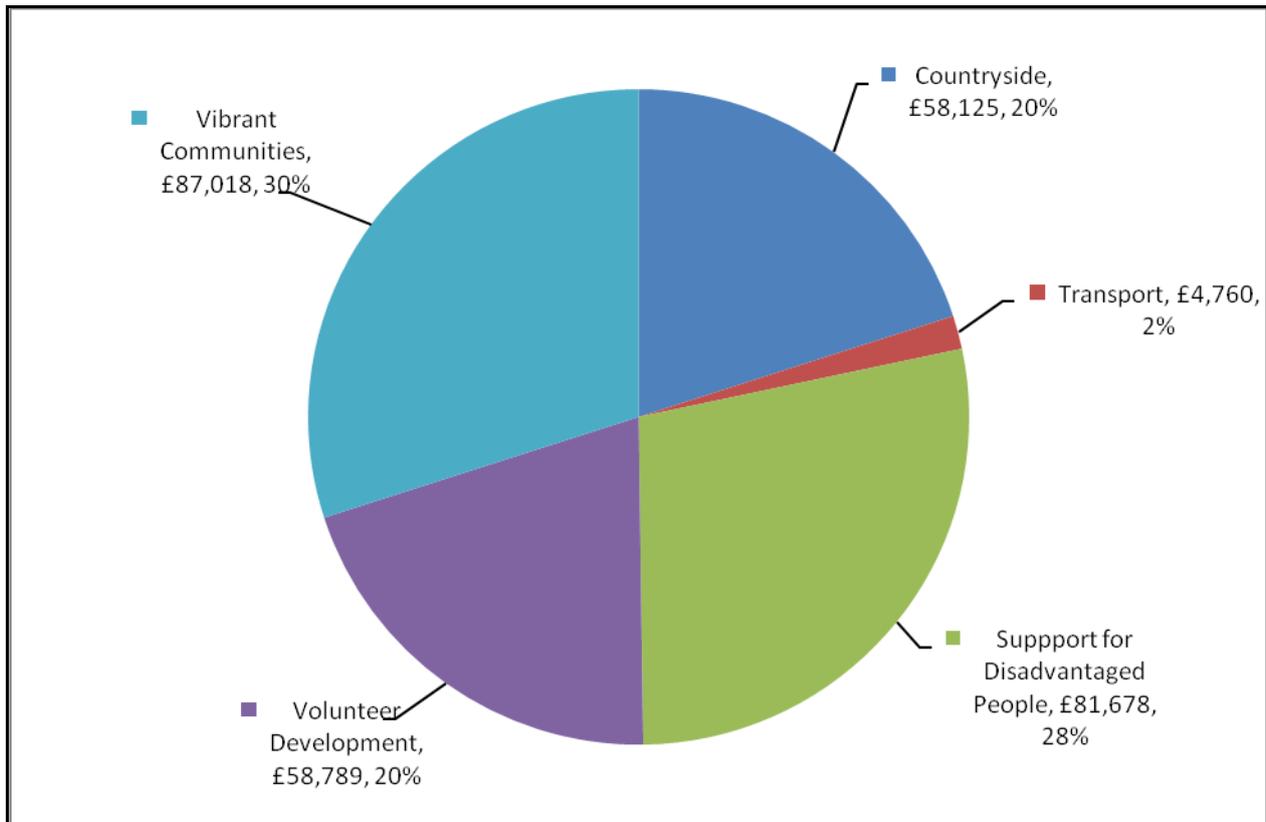
REVENUE FUNDING 2011/12

Group Name	Grant Purpose	Grant Amount 2011/12
East Bergholt High School	Deficit Funding	£ 11,330
Hadleigh High School	Deficit Funding	£ 11,330
Gt Cornard Upper School	Deficit Funding Gt Cornard Swimming Pool	£ 2,275
Gt Cornard Sports Centre	Project Funding	£ 11,997
East Bergholt	Project Funding	£ 8,250
Hadleigh High leisure Centre	Project Funding	£ 9,250
Quay Theatre	Core funding	£ 35,000
Sudbury & District CAB	Core funding	£ 51,900
Ipswich CAB	Core funding	£ 7,673
Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project	Core fund (part of long term agreement)	£ 22,280
Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Unit	Core funding	£ 17,335
Suffolk Wildlife Trust	Core funding	£ 1,250
Greenways Countryside Project	Continuation of Project works	£ 5,500
Harwich Foot Ferry	Core funding	£ 2,000
Haven Gateway Partnership	Core funding	£ 6,000
ISCRE	Core funding	£ 1,250
Rural Development Managers	Core funding rural development & funding advice	£ 5,300
Suffolk Hate Crime	Core funding	£ 3,000
Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board	Contribution to Countywide board	£ 8,800
Suffolk Biological Records Centre	Core funding	£ 7,000
Suffolk ACRE	Voluntary sector support	£ 1,700
Babergh Communities Together	Voluntary sector infrastructure support	£ 8,000
Hadleigh Community Transport Group	Core funding	£ 450
Bridge Project	Core funding	£ 4,000
DanceEast	Arts project	£ 3,500
Eastern Angles	Core funding	£ 400
Edens Project	Core funding	£ 8,800
Hadleigh Elderly Peoples Welfare Committee	Core funding	£ 680
Home Start Babergh	Core funding	£ 8,800
Ipswich Womens Aid	Core funding	£ 1,250
Kernos Centre	Core funding	£ 2,650
Managing a Masterpiece	Core funding	£ 3,700

Orchestras Live	Arts project work	£ 2,400
Solo Housing	Support for single homeless people within Babergh	£ 3,100
Sudbury Town Area Rural Transport	Core funding	£ 1,250
Suffolk Artlink	Arts project work	£ 1,250
Suffolk Digital Cinema Network	Core funding	£ 300
Suffolk Museums Partnership	Core funding	£ 500
	TOTAL	£ 281,450

Appendix 2

Babergh Revenue Funding 2011/12 related to strategic themes



Appendix 3

Revenue Grants Budget 2009 - 13

2009/10	£428,500
2010/11	£328,000
2011/12	£283,090
2012/13	£268,470



Appendix 4

CAPITAL GRANTS 2011/12

Group Name	Grant Purpose	Grant Approved 2011/12
The Quay Theatre	Furniture	£ 750
The Kernos Centre	Office equipment	£ 2,300
Eden Rose Coppice Trust	Improvements to vehicular access	£ 750
The Ansell Centre	Alterations to improve kitchen and toilet facilities	£ 25,000
Whatfield Playground Committee	Play area and equipment purchase	£ 8,800
Cornard Bowls Club	New roof for bowls pavilion	£ 1,350
Hintlesham & Chattisham CC	Improvements to lighting	£ 650
Long Melford Parish Council	Provision of exhibition cases for history project	£ 750
Sudbury Town Council	Bio diversity trail - signage & information boards	£ 2,500
Sudbury Common Lands Charity	Pollarding trees rear of old bathing place	£ 420
Green Light Trust	Land purchase, Frithy Wood Lawshall	£ 5,000
Capel Community Trust	Community Hall toilet improvements	£ 3,000
Hitcham PC	Play area signage	£ 634
Somerton Parish Meeting	Meeting room improvements	£ 1,900
Elmsett PC	Play Equipment	£ 15,000
Edens Project	Office equipment	£ 712
Hartest Bowls Club	Bowls equipment	£ 750
Thorpe Morieux PC	Fencing, gates, hedging and trees	£ 2,113
Hartest Parish Council	Playgroup equipment	£ 500
Shotley Parish Council	Purchase of land at Shotley cliff	£ 15,500
Tattingstone Parish Council	Tennis court resurfacing	£ 3,750
Gt Waldingfield PC	Village Hall external improvement works	£ 6,000
Gt Waldingfield PC	IT equipment, induction loop	£ 2,000
Freston Village Hall	Improvements to toilets in village hall	£ 2,088
Cockfield VH & School	Replacement windows in village hall	£ 4,400
Kernos	Soundproofing, chairs, storage cabinet, shelving	£ 3,200
Preston St Mary Village Hall	New village hall floor	£ 1,045
Bures Transition Group	Fencing for woodland area	£ 3,360
Chelmondiston PC	Improvement works Jubilee garden in Chelmondiston	£ 1,500
BCT - Sudbury	IT equipment	£ 320
	TOTAL	£116,042