

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>From: Corporate Manager – Strong Communities</b>	<b>Report Number: JSC/17/15</b>
<b>To: Joint Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 16 December 2015</b>

**GRANTS REVIEW AND EXTERNAL FUNDING**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide details on the work of the Grants Review Project and the scoping and development within the first phase from July 2015 to November 2015 in line with the Project Steering Board.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That, as part of the second phase of the Grants Review Project, the following be the subject of further investigation:
- (a) To include the external funding offer in the work of the Grants Review Project to maximise opportunities for our Districts through external funders and opportunities locally, regionally and nationally.
  - (b) To research the reduction of our Communities Grant spending from 2017 to 2020 and align internal budgets for non-grant allocations.
  - (c) To pay the Annual Revenue Grants in interim stages to ensure robust monitoring, evaluation and meeting of strategic priorities.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

**3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 With the pressure on our budgets throughout the next years we need to ensure we develop and maximise the external funding opportunities available for our Districts to reduce the overall reliance on our grant funding.

**4. Legal Implications**

The District Councils have a commitment through the Compact to notify and update grant recipients of any changes to grant funding 12 months in advance of any decisions.

**5. Risk Management**

- 5.1 This report key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
<p>Reducing the Grant Programme spending from 2017 - 2020 will have a negative impact on the services and facilities provided by our current grant recipients</p>	<p>Medium to High</p>	<p>*Manageable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Taper the reduction in the revenue grant over a 3 year period</li> <li>* Work alongside the groups and organisations to support the development of robust fundraising strategies</li> <li>* Maximise the external funding opportunities to reduce revenue and capital Grant Funding</li> <li>* Work with our external funders to shape and design criteria specifically for our localities needs</li> <li>* Provide ongoing opportunities for skills development on external funding within the Communities Team</li> </ul>

## 6. Consultations

In July 2015 the Grants Review Project set up a Task and Finish Group to scope the work and develop the opportunity to ensure the current processes and practices in place are fit for purpose.

The Task and Finish Group includes Officers from the Communities, Business Improvement and Communications Teams internally and the Communities Manager from the Ipswich Borough Council.

The Project is undertaking a feedback exercise with current grant recipients to gather further information on our service and the impact of our work.

These consultations will continue into Phase 2 and include partners from local, regional and national bodies:

- District and Borough Councils
- Suffolk County Council
- Suffolk Community Foundation
- BIG Lottery

## **7. Equality Analysis**

7.1 This transformational work on the Grants Review Project is across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils.

## **8. Key Information**

8.1 The original Grant Review Project objective was to ensure that our grant scheme was delivered effectively, equitably and inclusively and that it is fully aligned to the delivery of the Councils strategic priorities. Work included:

- To ensure we have in place a consistent process for administering our grant scheme including the qualifying criteria's, application process, assessment procedures as well as effective monitoring and evaluation processes.
- To align and simplify the budget allocation within the revenue, capital, minor and discretionary areas.
- Current grant allocations are:  
Babergh capital £ 129,000 (includes Minor Grants)  
Babergh Revenue £ 290,431 (includes Discretionary Grants)  
Mid Suffolk capital £ 240,000  
Mid Suffolk revenue £ 318,982 (includes Minor and Discretionary)
- To enable all grant allocations and recipients to be reviewed to ensure they fit within the criteria and provide recommendations to maximise the funding available to create community resilience and capacity.
- To encourage and enable our wider communities to secure external funding through the provision of support, information and activities which stimulate and empower people's skills, confidence and experience.
- To develop an outcome based commissioning approach for significant areas of spend and to determine whether these should sit outside the grants scheme, ensuring we align this with the wider county, regional and national conversations, actions and funding opportunities

8.2 With the development of the Task and Finish Group's work it is evident the grants are invaluable to groups and organisations working to maximise community benefit and those meeting our strategic priorities. This is further developed with our offer of help, support and guidance when discussing and exploring their project and organisational ideas and plans. It therefore, broadens our impact on communities to take in the development and building of skills, providing confidence in applying for additional and external funds and ensures applications being made for our communities are fit for purpose and can reflect evidence of need and outcome measures effectively.

We are developing a broader understanding of the additional funding partners engaged with groups in our localities and their relationship management in terms of grant support. This includes the work with our Citizens Advice Bureau, we currently grant fund 5 CABs impacting on our localities, and the potential to commission these services.

- 8.3 Building on the above comments the Review is not purely based on the spend for the Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council Grants and will encompass:
- a. Reduction in grant spending over 2017-2020
  - b. Increase external funding opportunities and awareness raising
  - c. Developing skills, offering mentoring and case study evidence base financial value added to communities through external funding

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