

VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CABINET

23RD OCTOBER, 2003

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To determine allocations of grants to a number of strategic voluntary sector organisations.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

That additional allocation of the following sums be made:

Citizens Advice Bureau	£4,000
ECHO	£2,500
Herefordshire Voluntary Action	£2,500
Community Voluntary Action Ledbury	£1,000

Reason

To allocate additional funding to strategic organisations.

Considerations

1. The Voluntary Sector Grants Panel is responsible for advising the Cabinet Member for Social and Community Development on the allocation of grants to Voluntary Sector Organisations in Herefordshire.
2. At the current time a major review of the policy on Voluntary Sector grants both in terms of direct funding and in kind support has been started. It includes representation from the Voluntary Sector Grants Panel. The funding of the Voluntary Sector groups in Herefordshire falls into two categories: The first are "one off" grants, currently made on the basis of twice yearly bidding rounds one prior to the start of each new financial year and one in May. The process was delayed this year and the Voluntary Sector Grants Panel met on the 9th September, 2003 to advise on the second round of grants.
3. In addition the panel was asked to consider an approach to be adopted in relation to strategic organisations which had been invited to make additional bids for unallocated funds. This second category of strategic organisations provide much of

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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the general infrastructure for the Voluntary Sector in Herefordshire and as reported at the time of the last budget panel and through subsequent meetings of the Voluntary Sector Grants Panel a significant number are experiencing resource difficulties. These were discussed by the Voluntary Sector Grants Panel at its meeting in March and again on 9th September, 2003. The Voluntary Sector, like the Council relies heavily on sums of external funding. These are often time limited and there is no immediate source of renewal.

4. By using some un-allocated reserves the sum of £10,000 was made available for which strategic organisations could bid. Requests were received from the following organisations: ECHO, Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB), Herefordshire Voluntary Action, Ross International Festival, Community Voluntary Action Ledbury
5. Normally the Panel would have advised the Cabinet Member who would then have taken the decision on the final allocations. However in this instance the Cabinet Member is also Chairman of Herefordshire Voluntary Action, one of the applicant bodies. In these circumstances the recommendation is made for Cabinet to determine the final allocation because of the potential conflict of interest.
6. The Members of the Voluntary Sector Grants Panel advised that their first priority was to support the CAB. The Council is already working with the CAB to determine appropriate service delivery mechanisms for the CAB alongside the Council. Secondly the Panel wanted to support ECHO in recognition of the work it does across the county which is of an exciting and innovative nature. Another concern was to support Herefordshire Voluntary Action and Community Voluntary Action Ledbury as they seek to maintain the Voluntary Sector infrastructure across the county. It was felt that that the review of funding for the Ross-on-Wye International Festival should be incorporated as part of a broader budget considerations.

Alternative Options

Not to approve the allocation of additional funding to the strategic organisations.

Risk Management

No major issues identified.

Consultees

Voluntary Sector Grants Panel.

Background Papers

None identified.