

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendations

General

1. That support to the Community and Voluntary sector should be properly recorded where officers complete individual work programmes and time recording sheets.
2. That market testing of service options be considered or takes place in appropriate service areas.
3. That a Council Community and Voluntary Sector support strategy be drawn up and adopted as soon as possible.
4. That individual Council Departments examine the scope for including the Community and Voluntary Sector in achieving their strategies' objectives.

Voluntary Sector Grants

5. That the current funding by percentage guideline allocations be discontinued.
6. That the current two annual bidding rounds be replaced by a single bidding round. Alternatively, that voluntary sector grant applications be made on a rolling basis and considered at quarterly intervals.
7. That funding for more than one year should not be provided by grants but through Service Level Agreements where appropriate.
8. That grant applications be considered on merit against criteria, which have been revisited, strengthened and made more transparent.
9. That once the grant criteria have been revised the allocation of grants be delegated to officers, with the relevant Cabinet Member being consulted, along with the local Member where appropriate, in line with best practice of similar grant schemes operated by Herefordshire Council.
10. That the Voluntary Grants Scheme monitoring system be made more robust to facilitate a detailed evaluation of the effective use of grant funding, and its impact on Herefordshire and its residents.
11. That individual managers be made responsible for monitoring the satisfactory performance of grants relating to their service areas. That grants be conditional and only given in return for agreeing to meet a range of responsibilities.
12. That a limited amount of funding, to be agreed by the Cabinet Member, be ringfenced for the areas of greatest need within Herefordshire as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation Super Output Areas.

13. That funding be conditional upon the organisation in receipt of a grant having diversity and equal opportunities policies in place, which are acceptable to Herefordshire Council.
14. That an appraisal panel replace the practice of single officer appraisal of grant applications.

Service Level Agreements

15. It is recommended that SLAs be established with organisations that receive significant support (such as Age Concern), but that this be reviewed once the CVS support strategy has been approved.
16. That Service Level Agreements be made more specific and linked to required and measurable outputs and outcomes.
17. That clear and robust criteria be introduced against which Service Level Agreements should be monitored.
18. That any new or renewed Service Level Agreements be drawn up using the checklist of headings and guidance as outlined in this report.
19. That rolling Service Level Agreements should not routinely be entered into, but be used where this is appropriate.

Infrastructure Organisations

20. That the Council endorses Community and Voluntary services continuing to be provided locally.
21. That funding for Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District be withdrawn at the conclusion of the existing Service Level Agreement on the 31st March 2005, as there is no economic justification for supporting Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District as a separate organisation.
22. That such notice to Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District be given as early as possible.
23. That no more projects be awarded to Community First without a competitive tendering exercise taking place, and that this should apply to existing projects where the appropriate notice can be given.
24. That Herefordshire Association of Local Councils be warned of the implications of not meeting their Service Level Agreement monitoring requirements. In the event that Herefordshire Association of Local Councils fails to provide the monitoring information as outlined in the Service Level Agreement action be taken to terminate the Service Level Agreement.
25. That the Compact agreement between the PCT, the Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate (the Council) and the Alliance should be reviewed according to the terms in the COMPACT and by the Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Group.

APPENDIX 1

26. That collaborative working arrangements be pursued with Citizens Advice Bureaux, ABLE and Welfare Rights Team, but if this is not achievable that the Welfare Rights Team service be market tested,
27. That the Council continues to fund Citizens Advice Bureaux at least at existing levels whilst the option of partnership working with ABLE and the Welfare Rights Team are explored in more detail.
28. That suitable parcels of work involving community activity be tendered, such as community surveys or activities along the lines of Planning for Real exercises.
29. That the Race Equality Partnership be asked to consider the transfer of the service to the Community and Voluntary Sector. This can probably be best achieved by commissioning the activity with an individual Infrastructure organisation, or undertaking a market testing exercise.
30. That the Strategic Housing Department places more of a rural focus into the job description of one of its current Housing Officers.
31. That the Herefordshire Council Lifelong Learning Development Unit considers the scope for using the Community and Voluntary Sector to deliver a larger proportion of adult learning activity.
32. That some services be considered for market testing either for provision by the Community and Voluntary Sector or to be retained in-house. These are:
 - Work that involves going out into the community.
 - Parish plans consultation.
 - Community Development Co-ordinator.