

**PRESENTATIONS BY EXTERNAL AGENCIES IN RECEIPT OF AN ANNUAL COUNCIL GRANT**

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Colin Slade  
**Responsible Officer:** Grants & Funding Officer

**Reason for Report:** To set out the format for external agencies to provide a short presentation on their work and the value of the District Council's annual grant award at this and future Community Well Being Policy Development Group meetings.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the Policy Development Group consider the presentations from the Citizens Advice Bureau and Grand Western Canal and endorses the future schedule of presentations.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The allocation of grants provides support to external agencies delivering services that advance the Council's corporate priorities. Grant allocations tend to be most closely aligned to the Empowering our Communities priority, although they also have a bearing on other strategic objectives, such as Economic Development, including tourism, and Housing.

**Financial Implications:** Presentations by agencies in receipt of an annual grant award will enable the Policy Development Group to form a better understanding of their work and the benefit of the Council's grant allocation. This will lead to more informed decision making when the PDG is asked to recommend grant award levels for 2016/17.

**Risk Assessment:** There is minimal risk to the Council in receiving presentations from annually grant funded agencies, although the Policy Development Group will need to take into account that the current term of the Corporate Plan, against which grant awards are assessed, ends in 2015.

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In 2015/16 the Council will award grants totalling £178,225 to twelve agencies providing fourteen services (Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life also delivers a tourist information service from the museum, while Tiverton and District Community Transport Association also manages community transport services in Crediton and its rural hinterland).
- 1.2 Over the last five financial years, grant payments to external agencies have been reduced from £240,290 (2011/12) to £178,225, representing a 26% decrease.
- 1.3 There is an ongoing requirement to identify savings from all Council services to accommodate an assumed 10% reduction in government grant for 2016/17.

- 1.4 The Council has established a track record of carefully managing grant reductions in order that the impact on agencies providing services to the district's most vulnerable residents is minimised. Over the last two years, more severe decreases in annual grant to individual agencies have been avoided by reducing the Seed Fund budget. However, as the Seed Fund budget stands at £1,075 for 2015/16, it cannot be deployed to protect agencies against reductions in 2016/17.
- 1.5 Should the PDG be required to recommend savings from the grant budget for 2016/17, it may be faced with challenging and potentially unpopular choices.
- 1.6 The purpose of introducing presentations by annually grant funded agencies is to help Members form a better understanding of the work and services each agency provides, and how the Council's grant enables the delivery of these services to take place.

## 2.0 Presentation Framework

- 2.1 Two external agencies will be invited to each give a 15 minute presentation on their work, plus 5 minutes for questions and answers. The style and content of each presentation will be for individual agencies to determine.
- 2.2 Agencies will be invited in order of the size of their annual grant, with the recipients of the largest grant asked to present first.

The schedule of presentations up to 2 February 2016 will be:

27 January 2015	(1) Citizens Advice Bureau and (2) Grand Western Canal
24 March 2015	(1) Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life and (2) Tiverton and District Community Transport Association (including Crediton and District Community Transport).
30 June 2015	(1) Involve – Voluntary Action in Mid Devon and (2) Churches Housing Action Team.
18 August 2015	(1) Age UK Mid Devon and (2) Tourism Information Service.
13 October 2015	(1) Market Centre Youth Drop-In, Tiverton and (2) Community Housing Aid Nightstop Service.
8 December 2015	(1) Crediton Arts Centre and (2) Sunningmead Community Association.
2 February 2016	Blackdown Support Group

- 2.3 If an agency declines an invitation, the invitation will be passed to the next on the list and the agency that has declined will be added to the bottom of the list.
- 2.4 Each presenting agency has been briefed in advance and asked to keep to their allocated time. Any outstanding questions can be answered outside of the meeting. Agencies have been asked specifically to explain why the

Council's grant is important to them and what it enables them to do, matching their services against the Council's Corporate Plan priorities where appropriate.

### **3.0 The Citizens Advice Bureau**

3.1 The Citizens Advice Bureau provides free information and advice on a wide range of subjects, including welfare benefits, employment, debt, housing, consumer matters, family and relationship issues, legal help, discrimination, immigration, education and health. It has offices in Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton, with weekly opening hours of 18, 15 and 3 respectively.

3.2 The Council's annual grant award to the Citizens Advice Bureau since 2009/10 has been:

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Grant awarded</b>
2009/10	£54,060
2010/11	£54,060
2011/12	£54,060
2012/13	£50,000
2013/14	£50,000
2014/15	£50,000
2015/16	£47,500

3.3 £14,500 is deducted at source from the annual grant to cover rental and service costs at Tiverton Town Hall and Crediton Council Offices.

3.4 The Citizens Advice Bureau's performance information for its Mid Devon operation, covering the period 1 July 2012 to 31 August 2104, is attached as Appendix 1.

### **4.0 The Grand Western Canal**

4.1 The Grand Western Canal Country Park and Local Nature Reserve extends 11.25 miles from the canal basin in Tiverton to the east of Holcombe Rogus. It provides opportunities for a range of leisure pursuits, including walking, cycling and fishing, and supports a number of businesses such as the Tiverton Canal Company and Abbotshood Cycle Hire. It is one of the district's leading tourist attractions and the only park to have received a Green Flag Award (Green Flag is a prestigious national award scheme that recognises well managed parks and open spaces for all to enjoy).

4.2 The Council's annual grant award to the Grand Western Canal since 2009/10 has been:

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Grant awarded</b>
2009/10	£54,070
2010/11	£54,070
2011/12	£54,070
2012/13	£50,000

2013/14	£45,000
2014/15	£45,000
2015/16	£45,000

4.3 The Grand Western Canal's performance information for the period 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2014 is attached as Appendix 2.

**Contact for more information:** Paul Tucker (Grants and Funding Officer, ext. 4930; email: [ptucker@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:ptucker@middevon.gov.uk)).

**Circulation of the report:** Management Team, Cllr C Slade, Head of Communities and Governance, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, Community Development and Regeneration Manager.