

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

SUMMARY of a **MEETING** of the **GRANTS WORKING GROUP** held on 10 November 2015 at 3.30 pm

Present Councillors

Mrs A R Berry, Mrs B M Hull, F W Letch,
R F Radford, Mrs E J Slade and C R Slade

Apologies Councillors

N A Way

Also Present Officers:

Amy Tregellas (Head of Communities and Governance and
Monitoring Officer)

1 To Elect a Chairman of the Working Group

Councillor Mrs B M Hull was elected as Chairman of the Group.

The Group **AGREED** that Cllr F W Letch be added to the Membership.

The Group **AGREED** that Cllr RF Radford be added to the Membership.

2 Group to Review the Grants Report

The Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being explained to the Group that the comments he had made at the Policy Development Group the previous week in no way reflected on officers or on the standard of the report. He explained that officers had been instructed to make further cuts to the report after he had seen it.

He further informed the Group that it had been agreed by the Cabinet and senior officers that funding for the canal would be removed from the Grants budget and that funding had been identified from elsewhere. This meant that the Grants budget was better off by £45k.

It was agreed that the Group would work through the list of remaining grant recipients and identify cuts.

Blackdown Support Group – The Head of Communities and Governance explained that the group had a high turnover and substantial reserves. The group discussed whether or not the £200 grant was necessary and whether service would be affected if it was removed.

Proposed removal of the £200 grant.

CHAT –Officers explained that a lot of good work was undertaken by CHAT and that the work they undertook often benefited the Housing Service as they gave assistance to those in need.

Proposed no cut to the grant.

Citizens Advice Bureau – Officers had received comments from the public saying that service was not as good as it had been in the past and Members reported their own experiences which had not been positive. The authority had its own financial service for tenants (Moneywise) which was well regarded. Members discussed a reduction in grant to incentivise the CAB to improve service. A new Chief Executive was now in post so it was hoped that improvements would be seen.

Proposed cut £5k

Community Housing Aid Nightstop Service – The Officer explained that Nightstop covered East Devon, Exeter and Mid Devon, most cases were Exeter based, but Mid Devon was paying more.

Proposed cut £500

Crediton Arts Centre – Officers explained that they appeared to have healthy reserves and turnover, though there was concern that there might have been an accounting error regarding assets. Discussion took place regarding the contribution that the Arts Centre made to the town and the value of the projects they worked on, such as Christmas in Crediton. The Arts Centre met the criteria in the Corporate Plan for supporting the local economy.

Proposed no cut to grant.

INVOLVE – Officers explained that the Chief Executive of INVOLVE had left after the last round of grants and there had been queries regarding whether or not they were delivering a valued service. It was believed that the new Chief Executive was bringing the service up to speed.

Proposed cut £2.5k

Market Centre Drop-in Centre

Discussion took place regarding the fact that Members considered this to be a valued service, working with hard to reach youngsters. Rent was being increased.

Proposed no cut to grant.

Sunningmead Community Association

Officers explained that the Association had a good turnover with healthy reserves and that they weren't dependant on grants. However, they were working in a deprived area.

Proposed to halve grant this year and next year – cut £375.00

Tiverton and Crediton Community Transport – Discussion took place regarding the hours of operation and the need for further advertising of services for the Cullompton area.

Proposed cut £1275

Age UK

Proposed cut £500

Age UK	-£500
Blackdown Support group	-£200
CHAT	
CAB	-£5000
Nightstop	-£500
Crediton Arts Centre	
INVOLVE	-£2500
Market Centre Drop-in	
Sunningmead Association	-£375
Tiverton and Crediton Community Transport	-£1275
Total proposed cuts	-£10350.00

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Discussion took place regarding:

- The need to work closer with the organisations that received grants;
- The need to implement some form of service level agreement or auditing;
- Future cuts to budgets.#

The Group discussed appendix 5 of the report which highlighted agencies that were in receipt of rental subsidy or non-grant support greater than £1k.

Officers explained that these were not grant payments and that the organisations did not receive funding from the council, however they did pay lower rents on property or for the use of facilities. In the case of the swimming clubs a fee lower than market value was paid for the rental of the facilities, but the clubs generated substantial income for the centres. Without subsidy these clubs would not be able to afford to operate. It was **AGREED** that this needed to be made clearer, with more information provided, on future reports.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to the Community Well Being Policy Development Group that the revised cuts to grants be recommended to Cabinet and that the authority put in place procedures to ensure that monitoring of activity and finances of those in receipt of grants took place in the future.

The Group **RECOMMENDED** to the Policy Development Group that the Working Group be involved in any initial discussions regarding the setting of proposed cuts to future grants.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

(The meeting ended at 4.30 pm)