

Subject:	Commissioning and Grants		Status:	For Publication	
Report to:	Cabinet		Date:	5 th September 2012	
Report of:	Director of Customers and Communities		Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council	
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>	
Community Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes	Attached:	Yes	
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)				
1.1	That Cabinet note the consultation to date in relation to reviewing its grant funding, through the Rossendale Council Grants and Neighbourhood Forum grants, and replacing it with a commissioning model, based on reduced available resources.				

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To update Cabinet on consultation to date on the review of grant funding allocation.
- 2.2 To provide Cabinet with a report that articulates the Council's aspiration to move from the present grant funding arrangements to one of a commissioning model.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **A clean and green Rossendale** – creating a better environment for all
 - **A healthy and successful Rossendale** – supporting vibrant communities and a strong economy
 - **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Not distributing finances via robust, open and transparent criteria could open the commissioning process to challenge by those making or wishing to make an application, the benefactor/s of the funding (end user) or a potential legal challenge from outside bodies.

4.2 The commissioning model needs to ensure that any funding criteria is designed to ensure that councillors have information which will support responsible financial management through the allocation of available funding against the Council's priorities. Having a flawed process could undermine this principle.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 It should be stated from the outset that:

- ***The present 'Rossendale Council Grant' and Neighbourhood Forum funding allocation is secured within the Medium Term Financial Strategy until 31st March 2014.***

5.2 Rossendale Borough Council has faced and will continue to face the challenge of cutting its core budget. It is estimated that, subject to no more unforeseen austerity measures, that the Council needs to cut its present budget of £9.8million to £8.5 million; a £1.3million cut by 2016 – 2017, in order to match its financial resources.

5.3 A refreshed 'Grants' policy introduced in 2011 gave organisations/groups the option of applying for funds through a Rossendale Council Grant process where applicants could apply for– a 'One Year-one off grant' or a 'Three Year Grant'. In addition applications were sought via the Neighbourhood Forums where applicants can apply for either a grant of up to £500 or for project funding to support the delivery of the priorities set within the Neighbourhood Forum Action Plan.

5.4 In June 2011 the Council allocated Rossendale Council Grant as per the report to Council in June 2011.

5.5 A report to Cabinet on 26th January 2011 outlined The Council's desire to move towards a commissioning model for the allocation of the resource it allocates to the Civil Sector in order to improve outcomes against its priorities in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way (Value for Money).

5.6 Commissioning is often discussed as a cycle of **Analysis** – gaining an understanding of the needs and wants of the community, **Planning** - identifying gaps between what is needed and what is available/provided and planning how these gaps can be filled with the resources available, **Doing** - ensuring that the services commissioned are delivered as outlined in the commissioning strategy and in a way that provides value for money and **Reviewing** - monitoring the impact of the commissioned services and analysing the extent to which they have achieved the desired outputs and outcomes.

5.7 ***It is important to note that the service may be commissioned via the public, private or civil society sector.***

5.8 In terms of commissioning to the 'Civil Society' a Government White Paper talks about a **Vision** for commissioning as:

Better public outcomes for individuals and communities, which yields efficiency gains and community benefits, through smarter, more effective and innovative

commissioning, and optimal involvement of the third sector in public service design, improvement, delivery and holding the public sector to account is the vision of the National Programme for Third Sector Commissioning.

- 5.9 To make the above vision a reality, between now and when the present grants allocation comes to an end on 31st March 2014, the Council will follow principles of best practice whilst undertaking the development of a commissioning model.
- 5.10 Going forward it is proposed that the Communities Manager undertakes a programme of work over the next 12 months and presents a discussion reports to Overview and Scrutiny – Policy and Cabinet before presenting a final report to Full Council.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 The impact on The Council’s financial resources will be quantified as the Commissioning Framework is developed.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 The Council is empowered under its general powers of competency to undertake this commissioning approach. The Council needs to undertake any procurement under any proposed commissioning programme in compliance with Procurement Regulations.

8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 8.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard in the exercising of its functions to three considerations. The need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The amount of regard that is “due” is set out in the Act and will depend on the circumstances of the case. Under the general equality duty there is a requirement to engage with people with protected characteristics and to have an adequate evidence base for Council decision-making.

The Council is under a Duty to Consult representatives of a wide range of local people; this should include local voluntary and community organisations and small businesses in such consultation.

9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 9.1 Internal consultation has been with the Portfolio Holder and wider Cabinet and Senior Management Team.
- 9.2 Consultation has begun with groups who are currently in receipt of Council Grants. The Communities Manager has been meeting with groups and discussions are being around a series of questions aimed at establishing what the impact of any changes to grant funding amounts and process would be on the groups and their service users. A copy of the question framework is attached at Appendix 1.
- 9.3 Once these meetings are complete, all groups will be sent a letter restating the context and proposals and reflecting the notes taken in the meetings.
- 9.4 Further consultation is planned with Neighbourhood Forums, key equality groups and via the Communities Database.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 This report sets out consultation to date on the review of grant funding and highlights in more defined terms the aspiration of the Council to move to a commissioning model for determining the allocation of resources to the third sector.
- 10.2 The final commissioning framework will be developed in conjunction with everyone that has a vested interest in it, which will result in a fit for purpose model that meets the guiding principle of delivering value for money services set against the priorities agreed by the Council.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Cabinet report Wednesday, 26th January 2011, (See Appendix 5)	http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/site/scripts/meetings_info.php?meetingID=585
Cabinet report Thursday, 17th March 2011, Item C1	http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/site/scripts/meetings_info.php?meetingID=540
Cabinet report, Wednesday 29th June 2011, Item C1	http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/site/scripts/meetings_info.php?meetingID=637