

Subject:	Allocation of Rossendale Borough Grants 2014- 15	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	19 th March 2014
Report of:	Director of Business	Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council and Communities and Partnerships
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes	Attached: Yes
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That Cabinet confirms the allocation of Rossendale Council Grants of £48,000 to Rossendale Citizens Advice Bureau and £12,000 to Rossendale Credit Unions to support financial inclusion services in 2014-2015.
1.2	That all future minor amendments to the grants process be delegated to the Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To seek Cabinet confirmation of the allocation of Rossendale Council Grants for 2014-2015.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
 - **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
- 4.2 Not issuing grant funding via robust, open and transparent criteria could open the process to challenge by those making or wishing to make an application.
- 4.3 The grant funding criteria is designed to ensure that councillors have information which will support responsible financial management through the allocation of grant funding against the Council's agreed criteria of allocating target funding to support financial inclusion services.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 The background to this issue was presented to Cabinet on 23 October 2013. Cabinet agreed to allocate £60,000 in 2014-15 for the provision of grants for services to facilitate financial inclusion in Rossendale, to be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process to reflect the serious financial pressures the Council is experiencing.

- 5.2 On 27 November 2013, Cabinet agreed the amended grant allocation process, criteria and timetable to be followed. It was also agreed that responsibility for assessing the completed applications is delegated to officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and confirmed by Cabinet
- 5.3 The grants application process opened on 9th December 2013 and closed on 13th January 2014. Completed applications were received from Rossendale Citizens Advice Bureau and Mid Rossendale Credit Union on behalf of the 3 Rossendale Credit Unions (Mid Rossendale, Bacup and First Choice). The applications were assessed by an evaluation panel of officers on 14th January. Both applications met the stated criteria.
- 5.4 Rossendale Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) applied for £53,000 for funding towards their core service. Rossendale Credit Unions applied for £20,000 for costs associated with a development worker to promote the service and encourage new members. Both organisations are currently in receipt of Rossendale Council grant funding to support the provision of financial inclusion services. CAB receive £50,000 per year (2011/12 - 2013/14) towards their core funding and the Credit Unions receive £9,200 per year (2011/12 - 2013/14) for training volunteers, marketing and running costs.
- 5.5 The total available for Rossendale Council Grants is £60,000. The Grants Evaluation Panel, consisting of 3 officers, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder recommend the allocation of one year grants as follows for 2014-2015:
- CAB - £48,000 – A slight reduction (-2%) in their current grant reflecting their need to become more sustainable and their proposed move to Stubblelee Hall which will result in reduced overheads.
 - Credit Unions - £12,000 – although less than they are applying for, this grant represents an increase from their current grant (+30%) and covers the costs of the development worker post.
- 5.6 An initial equality impact assessment is attached to this report in Appendix 1. An overview is noted in section 8 of this report.
- 5.7 The recommendations are set out in section 1 of this report.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 Financial implications are noted within the report

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 All relevant comments are contained in the body of the report.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 8.1 Extensive consultation was held with the current recipients of Rossendale Council Grant funding prior to the submission of the Grants Report to Cabinet in October 2013. In addition a full equality impact assessment was completed on the proposals to target grant funding on financial inclusion services.
- 8.2 The Rossendale Financial Inclusion Group have been consulted on the criteria for grant funding, and the criteria has been developed in conjunction with the Group.

8.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the decision to allocate Rossendale Council funding as outlined in this report. In allocating £60,000 for the provision of grant funding for services that facilitate financial inclusion in Rossendale there is no reduction to current levels of service. Rossendale Citizens Advice Bureau and Rossendale Credit Unions are the current providers of this service and both are currently in receipt of grant funding for financial inclusion services. The allocations proposed will enable them to continue to provide the service at least at the current level.

8.4 Therefore it is determined that there is no negative or disproportionate impact on any protected equality groups as a result of allocating Rossendale Council grants as proposed.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 A robust, open and transparent process has been followed in the allocation of Rossendale Council Grants for 2014-15.

9.2 Cabinet agreed on 23/10/2013 that £60,000 would be allocated to the provision of grants for services to facilitate financial inclusion in Rossendale, to be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process. Cabinet subsequently agreed that the previous grant allocation process be adapted to support the allocation of target funding to support financial inclusion services. The adapted grants process has been followed and Cabinet are asked to confirm the allocation of grants to the two applicants: Rossendale Citizens Advice Bureau and Rossendale Credit Unions.

Background Papers

Document	Place of Inspection
Grants Review: Rossendale Council and Neighbourhood Forum Grants	www.rossendale.gov.uk
Grants 2014-15	www.rossendale.gov.uk
Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment	Attached