

Subject:	Rossendale Community Fund - Guidelines, Criteria and Application Process	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	8 July 2015
Report of:	Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration	Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Leisure
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 approves the guidelines, criteria and application process for the allocation of grants through the Rossendale Community Fund, administered by the Community Foundation for Lancashire.
1.2	That Cabinet delegates decision making on individual applications for the Rossendale Community Fund to the Grants Advisory Group in conjunction with the Community Foundation for Lancashire.
1.3	That all future minor amendments to the Rossendale Community Fund process be delegated to the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To detail the proposed guidelines, criteria, application process and timetable for the new Rossendale Community Fund, developed in conjunction with the Community Foundation for Lancashire, and to seek Cabinet's approval.

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 In July 2009 the Council agreed to transfer inactive / dormant assets to the Community Foundation for Lancashire to create a Rossendale Community Fund to be managed and delivered by the Community Foundation. The transferred assets were transferred to the Community Foundation's endowment fund with the agreement that the income from the assets be used for charitable activities in Rossendale.
- 5.2 The fund has now accumulated sufficient funds (£14,754) to make a grant making process worthwhile. It is estimated that about £5000 will be added each year. These figures are net of the Community Foundations costs for admin etc.
- 5.3 Under the terms of the Fund Agreement the Community Foundation will deliver the Rossendale Community Fund on behalf of Rossendale Borough Council. This will include advertising and promotion, sifting applications and due diligence checking, assessment of applications, support for panel meetings and payment and monitoring of grants as detailed in Appendix 1 Community Foundation Fund Support.
- 5.4 It is proposed that the Community Foundation will make recommendations on the awarding of grants, with the Rossendale Borough Council Grants Advisory Group (comprising 7 Borough Cllrs) making the final decisions. The Community Foundation will support the Grants Advisory Group and will provide an induction pack for members of the panel. The Community Foundation will make a recommendation regarding a suitable community member / third party representative on the Grants Advisory Group.

Guidelines for Rossendale Community Fund

- 5.5 The fund agreement with the Community foundation includes the following Policy Objectives: *To support the local community of Rossendale, particularly the areas of Bacup, Haslingden and Rawtenstall. To be mindful of the original objects of the trust funds that the Council administered, ensuring the following priorities:*
- *To advance education and training in the Rossendale area*
 - *To provide prizes scholarships or grants to those residing in the Rossendale area*
 - *To benefit voluntary organisations and community groups in the Rossendale area that are providing educational activities and or / working to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in the local area*
- 5.6 Since then, the Community Foundation for Lancashire has produced the report Lancashire's Vital Signs which reflects factual data, the voices of local community leaders and citizens concerns and aspirations. (see Appendix 2). Vital Signs is intended as a giving guide for funders. The Rossendale section includes the following:
- Citizen's concerns:**
- Education and Learning
 - Environment
 - Children, Young people and Families
- Citizen's Aspirations:**
- To maintain Rossendale's unique environment
 - To lift the aspirations of local people
 - To create new employment opportunities
- 5.7 Taking this into consideration, and to complement existing Rossendale Council grant funding, it is proposed that the Rossendale Community Fund offers grants to help community organisations who work with and support children and young people in the Borough.

It is proposed that the focus of the fund is to enable young people aged up to 25 to flourish, learn and develop skills or knowledge. This includes education, training, sports development, arts and culture activities and also play provision for younger children. Any community group working with families and young people up to the age of 25 would be eligible to apply – see Appendix 3 Rossendale Community Fund Guidelines. Priority will be given to applications for projects / groups that tackle disadvantage or deprivation.

5.8 Examples of eligible grant items include:

- Training courses
- Residential courses
- Qualifications
- Educational visits
- Structured play sessions
- Sports activities
- Arts and culture activities

5.9 Taking into consideration the total amount available and the funding criteria, it is proposed that the maximum grant available under the Community Fund is £1000, to be reviewed after each grant making cycle.

Application Process and Timescale

5.10 It is proposed that the application process for the Rossendale Community Funds opens in early September 2015 with a timescale as follows:

- 6 week window for applications until mid-October
- 2 weeks for the Community Foundation to sift and assess applications
- 2 weeks for the Grants Advisory Panel to receive information and meet to make the final decisions.
- Grants can be paid towards the end of November.

5.11 If the total funds allocated in grants is less than the total available, a further grant cycle can be undertaken in March 2016, and up to twice yearly thereafter, depending on the amount available in the fund. It is proposed that the Fund remain flexible in terms of the maximum grant available and is reviewed before each grant cycle.

5.12 The Community Foundation will provide a bespoke online application form, based on their standard application form. All applications, and any queries, will be dealt with by the Community Foundation.

5.13 An initial equality impact assessment is attached to this report in Appendix 4. An overview is noted in section 8 of this report.

5.14 The recommendations are set out in section 1 of this report.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 All financial implications will be contained within exist budget and Community Fund resources.

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 Rossendale Borough Council supports many local organisations through its grants, particularly the Rossendale Council Grants which are targeted at organisations that support financial inclusion and Neighbourhood Forum Grants which provide grants of up to £500 to community groups that can provide added value to the residents of the Borough.
- 8.2 The Rossendale Community Fund will provide grants of up to £1000 specifically to support organisations working with children and young people. The Community Foundation for Lancashire have undertaken consultation in Rossendale and across Lancashire to inform their document Vital Signs, intended as a giving guide for funders. Their consultation is backed up by factual data. They identify Education & Learning and Children, Young People & Families as two of the three key concerns of local citizens.
- 8.3 Given the limited total amount of grant funding available, focussing the Community Fund on children and young people will enable the grants to have maximum impact in this priority area.
- 8.4 The Community Fund will complement existing grants available through the Council whilst helping to fill a gap in grant funding in a key priority area. Each year the Council receives many enquiries from local young people's groups regarding funding towards educational visits, expeditions, attendance at international sporting competitions etc. Such groups would be eligible to apply for the Community Fund.
- 8.5 As this is a new grant fund and is specifically aimed at organisations working with children and young people, a protected equality group, it will result in an increased level of service for this group. There will be no change in service for other groups, and therefore there will be no impact on other protected equality groups.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Rossendale Community Fund was created with the Community Foundation in 2010 to provide an income from dormant and inactive trusts that could be used for charitable activities in Rossendale. There are now sufficient funds available to make a viable grants fund, which is much needed at a time when grant funding generally is being reduced and community groups and organisations are struggling to access funding.
- 9.2 The new Rossendale Community Fund would offer grants to community organisations who work with and support children and young people in the Borough. This is a priority group for local people, identified through consultation undertaken by the Community Foundation. Grants of up to £1000 would be made available, with up to two grant panel meetings per year to make decisions on applications. The Community Foundation will administer and manage the process on behalf of the Council, as part of the funding agreement, with the Rossendale Council Grants Advisory Group making the final decisions on grants awarded.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Rossendale Community Fund Proposal Report	www.rossendale.gov.uk
Appendix 1 Community Foundation Fund Support	Attached
Appendix 2 Community Foundation Vital Signs	Attached

Appendix 3 Rossendale Community Fund Guidelines	Attached
Appendix 4 Initial Equality Impact Assessment	Attached