

NORTH DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

GRANTS STRATEGY

2007 - 2012

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INTRODUCTION

This grant strategy follows a review of the administration of the North Devon District Council's grant funding to external organisations. The present system of awarding grants was set up in 2002 and there have been changes in the Council's priorities and ways of working in the intervening period. There is scope for improvement in the method of awarding grants, as well as improved clarity and accountability in the process. This strategy aims to meet the needs of the Council and its residents, as it adopts the local government modernisation agenda by focusing on the key issues raised within the Government White Paper: Strong and Prosperous Communities (October 2006).

The strategy results from a period of research and consultation. The sources used in compiling the strategy have included:

- Recommendations from Internal Audit
- An analysis of the way groups have completed grant application forms
- A survey of grant procedures used elsewhere in the region
- Guidance notes, strategies and advice issued by national grant making bodies
- In-depth discussions with key officers and community workers
- North Devon District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- North Devon District Council Members

This Grants Strategy will be reviewed after its initial year of operation, and at this stage NDDC's internal auditors will make any necessary recommendations for amendments.

THE NATIONAL AGENDA FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR AND LOCAL AUTHORITY WORKING

Central Government views partnerships between local authorities and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) as essential to improving the delivery of public services and furthering community cohesion.

The VCS can play a crucial role because its services are often more flexible and innovative and more closely aligned to those people who make up hard to reach groups. It is recognised that local VCS groups lie at the heart of the character of communities and are pivotal in helping to build, maintain and develop them.

Government initiatives have started to strengthen the VCS infrastructure, develop relationships with local authorities and improve access to capital - namely ChangeUp, Compact Plus and Futurebuilders.

The recent Local Government White Paper, ***Strong and Prosperous Communities*** (Department for Communities and Local Government; October 2006), recommends a number of ways to improve the relationship between local authorities and the VCS. These include:

- Promote a healthy and sustainable VCS through Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements, and work towards its effective representation on Local Strategic Partnerships;
- Enable community groups to take ownership of local authority assets; and
- Establish good commissioning guidelines based on the principles contained in the Compact (Compact: a partnership of various organisations)

In particular, it is recommended that grants to the VCS be offered as longer term agreements to facilitate sustainable development and are free from unnecessary regulation and bureaucracy, so that voluntary groups can concentrate on providing much needed services rather than spend time delivering reports.

Other key policy documents and initiatives include:

- ***Together We Can*** campaign, www.togetherwecan.info
- ***Every Action Counts*** initiative, www.everyactioncounts.org.uk
- ***Firm Foundations: The Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building***, Home Office Communities Group, 8 December 2004

THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN NORTH DEVON

In Devon as a whole, the VCS has increased significantly over the last ten years. Approximately two thirds of organisations are local, independent organisations; most of these are active in the fields of welfare and social care. The VCS obtains most of its funds through external grants (from the Big Lottery Fund, local authorities, other charities, trust funds and the private sector), although fees/charges and fundraising also contribute a significant proportion of funds.

In 2003, North Devon had 432 voluntary and community organisations (VCOs), the majority being based in and around Barnstaple and Ilfracombe. The majority of these (84%) were engaged in direct service provision and providing information and advice (64%). Children and families were the greatest beneficiaries of VCO services, followed closely by the elderly and disabled. On average, 250 people benefited from each VCO.

In contrast to the more urban areas of Plymouth and Exeter, North Devon less heavily relies on fundraising and the majority of VCOs (70%) have no full-time paid staff.

The VCS in North Devon makes a vital contribution to the economy of the District. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) currently stands at about £90 million. 9.5% of the total registered labour force of the District is employed by the VCS. However, its economic strength is fragile because its success depends on many external factors beyond its control.

It is hoped that in the near future North Devon Voluntary Services, the associate Centre for Voluntary Services (CVS) will be eligible for Full CVS status. It has recently set up a Voluntary Sector Forum to represent VCOs in the District, with the aim of strengthening the sector's participation in partnership working.

The need for secure funding for key groups in the long term is vital for the well-being of the District and its residents. In return for long term security, key organisations have a duty to provide a quality service that meets local needs and gives value for money. Providing key groups with secure funding can diminish the funding available for new and innovative projects which might be of equal but shorter-term benefit. The adoption of criteria that will guide a balanced level of support is essential to ensure more vulnerable groups have an equal opportunity of securing funding.

North Devon District Council is a signatory to the Compact for Devon. The aim of the Compact for Devon is to improve and develop the relationship between the voluntary & community and statutory sectors in Devon. This revised grants strategy is written with the principles of that commitment in mind.

*Figures in this section were quoted from ***Research Into The Voluntary and Community Sector In Devon***; Learning And Skills Council, January 2003.

NORTH DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

North Devon District Council is dedicated to continuous improvement in service delivery, and being 'Close to the Community'. There is a clear need to link grant aid with Council Corporate Priorities, Policies and Strategies. This will be addressed through striving to achieve the Councils corporate priorities for the relevant year, which are outlined in the application guidance.

BEST VALUE

North Devon District Council is committed to improving services through Best Value. This includes testing the balance of quality and cost, and achieving quality services by managing its' resources effectively.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Plain English, improved promotion, targeting deprived areas, simple application forms and officer support are all seen as methods to improve social inclusion and to support those accessing grants and those benefiting from grant aided projects.

North Devon District Council is committed to:

- Equality of opportunity;
- Tackling discrimination and disadvantage;
- Tackling harassment and intimidation;
- Ending unlawful discrimination;
- Using its position as a major employer, provider of services and its economic power to provide equality of opportunity and for tackling discrimination, harassment, intimidation and disadvantage; and
- Encouraging other organisations, partners, service providers, and the private and voluntary sectors, to adopt similar policies on equality and diversity.

THE GRANTS STRATEGY

SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy applies to awards of money made through the Strategic Grants process; the Community Councillor Grants; the Capital Programme and loans.

Community Councillor Grants (formerly community grants) including Arts and Culture, Environment, Heritage, Social Welfare and Sport. The Grants and Funding Officer in consultation with each ward member will administer this budget.

Strategic Grants including Social Welfare, Environment, Arts, Culture, Heritage and Sport. The process of awarding Strategic grants will change, but the name will remain the same. Under this strategy, grants will now be awarded through a commissioned grant process, by which NDDC will select the services that give the best value for money for local people, for services community and voluntary organisations are currently providing.

If projects or services are required within the District and those services are better provided by an external agency, rather than NDDC, then the Council may tender for expressions of interest from others in order to provide this service. In those circumstances the Council will comply with its contract procedure rules as set out in its Constitution and Agreement containing the terms and conditions for provision of service will be drawn up for signature.

Capital Programme: Community buildings will be able to apply to the capital programme for funding to contribute towards capital costs. There are two levels of funding available: firstly, projects over £10,000; and secondly smaller capital projects under £10,000. Grants will be awarded under the Capital Appraisal Programme on a quarterly basis.

Loans, Underwriting and guarantees: These will be assessed on an ad hoc basis.

AIM

To provide grant support to community and voluntary groups to help develop activities and facilities that will benefit the socio-economic culture and environment of North Devon.

VISION

The Council's vision in providing grant aid is to:

- Support the economic, environmental, cultural and social welfare of the communities within the District;
- Value the contribution made by unpaid workers; and
- Encourage a vibrant voluntary sector.

VALUES

The Council's values in awarding grants are:

- To be financially efficient and prudent, reflecting the highest standards of public sector financial management;
- To be efficient, open and accountable in all operations and to provide clear and relevant information, guidance and feedback;
- To ensure that those requesting grant aid of the Council are fully supported in the application process;
- To be transparent open and fair in making decisions on grant applications;
- To reflect fully the ethnic and cultural diversity of the North Devon community;
- To ensure that projects which the Council supports are in accordance with the Council's sustainability charter;
- To work in partnership with other agencies;
- To ensure that projects are of high quality and represent the best value for money;
- To maximise the benefit of leverage from other grant sources for local benefit;
- To allocate funds in a way that takes full account of the most needy and disadvantaged in society; and
- To monitor and evaluate all funded projects in order to maximise impact and encourage best practice.

OBJECTIVES OF GRANTS

The Council will support projects that meet sustainability principles, especially those that promote charitable and philanthropic aims in support of Council Priorities, Policies and Strategies, including projects that:

- Build the capacity and longevity of third sector organisations;
- Improve communication with local communities through promoting the role of the community councillor;
- Empower local communities with a voice through communication with their local councillor so that people can easily report concerns and request help;
- Build and support locally led partnerships that both enable local communities to pursue their own needs and extend the capacity of the Council;
- Enable the provision of year round cultural, heritage and sporting opportunities based on open access, equality of opportunity and youth development;
- Ensure that everyone has access to services, and is included in the life of the community, by removing obstacles such as rural isolation;
- Improve the health and well-being of the people of North Devon, particularly those in the hard-to-reach groups;
- Make North Devon an even safer place to live and work through co-operation with relevant partners;
- Help to increase the average income per head, such as by providing specialist skills training;
- Protect and enhance the environment, now and for future generations, using principles of sustainability;
- Find the best ways of dealing with the refuse and waste produced in North Devon;
- Support partnership projects arising out of community action plans by assisting communities attaining their goals.

CATEGORIES OF GRANTS

Strategic: These are awards of money towards the provision of services offered by an outside agency which the awarding body considers important to the well-being of the local community or area in the longer term.

These grants are likely to be awarded for a number of years and are expected to continue for some time in the future. This process will involve commissioning of essential services, and will normally be allocated for three years but reviewed after 2 years, with a review of whether funding will be continued after the three year period. This will give organisations adequate lead-time to write business plans. All commissioning of services will be subject to a service level agreement. Failure to meet the requirements of the agreement is likely to result in the grant being withdrawn. The level of grant aid will be dependent upon the service NDDC wishes to commission, and this will be established through local and organisational need.

Community Councillor Grants: These are awards of money for a specific project such as an event, a new or re-furbished facility or a pilot of a new service. The grant seeker will approach the district councillor of their ward for support in their application. They are time limited. All project grants will be subject to a funding agreement. Failure to meet the requirements of the agreement is likely to result in the grant offer being withdrawn. The budget will be split equally amongst the 43 district councillors.

Capital Project Grants: Grants are available for capital works towards refurbishment costs of community facilities. NDDC will look to support organisations who have secured external funding, and who make a contribution of their own funds for the project.

Help in Kind: This is when an organisation is awarded use of facilities, e.g., meeting room or help from a Council officer instead of money.

Loans: This is when a sum of money is loaned at low interest or interest-free, to a community, business or charitable group to help them start up a new project or enterprise. All loans will be subject to stringent legal agreements.

Underwriting/guarantees: This is where Council agrees to fund any potential deficit or loss that might be incurred in order to ensure a project or event goes ahead.

For accounting purposes the division between Strategic Grants and the Community Councillor Grants (formerly called Community grants) will be continued.

SETTING THE FRAMEWORK

INDICATIVE ALLOCATIONS

The Council will determine the indicative funds allocated for grants by February of the year preceding the awards round. This will include the total amount available for Strategic Grants and the Community Councillor Grants. The final amount will be determined when the Council sets its final budget. Following the Council's indicative allocation the Executive will further sub-divide and provide indicative allocations for each type of grant.

Strategic Grants

In the case of strategic grants, the Executive will determine the indicative amount to be allocated to the commissioning of services.

Community Councillor Grants

Equal amounts to be awarded to each member of the Council will be set by the Executive.

Capital Programme

Requests for capital funding will be subject to capital fund being available.

Loans, underwriting and guarantees:

These will be considered upon receipt of an enquiry from the organisation in question.

ELIGIBILITY

All organisations and projects that are grant aided must benefit the community, the local economy or the residents of the District and must provide evidence of local support together with proof of need when making applications. Grants are generally awarded to non-profit community and voluntary organisations.

Geographical Location

All North Devon District Council Grants covered by this strategy are intended for the benefit of the people and environment of North Devon, as set out in the Council's corporate priorities. Grants are not given for projects and activities that occur outside of this District except when North Devon is one beneficiary of a partnership project which crosses District boundaries.

Strategic Grants are awarded to projects or services that benefit the entire district. The Community Councillor Grants are awarded to projects within the district councillor's electoral ward.

Loans can be made at both strategic and local level.

Organisational requirements

Strategic Grants and the *Community Councillor Grants* will only be awarded to not for profit or charitable enterprises that are governed by rules, constitution or Articles and Memoranda that are made publicly available and have an election process for their member or trustees. All organisations must operate on an equal opportunities basis and with regard to human rights. All organisational and financial records should be made available to the Council if required. NDDC will not fund organisations retrospectively.

Religious Organisations

In no circumstances will grants be given in furtherance of religious purposes. In some circumstances religious organisations may apply for a grant. However awards will only be made if the project or service has wide social, economic or environmental benefit for the local community irrespective of religion or denomination.

Demonstrating Need

In the case of every grant the applicant must prove a need for the service or project. This could be provided in any of a number of ways, e.g., Parish Plan, national statistics of social deprivation, customer figures for the previous year, lack of similar service or facility within a reasonable distance etc. The applicant

will also be required to prove the need for a grant by supplying a copy of their most recent accounts. Normally grants will not be made to organisations which have unallocated reserves amounting to more than the operating cost for the current year and one year following.

Demonstrating Support

All applicants for grants will be required to demonstrate that they have support from the local community. This could be in the form of letters from potential users, the local Parish Council, a survey of existing customers, etc.

Financial Sustainability

All grant applications will be required to demonstrate that the service is either; a stand alone project which will not require long-term support or maintenance, or; that the project will become self-financing after the grant period is finished, e.g., by providing an exit strategy.

Environmental Sustainability

All applicants must show that their project or service is not damaging to the environment or other people by completing a sustainable development checklist. Applicants should demonstrate that they are taking positive steps towards sustainable development in addition to the core purpose of the grant. E.g., Encouraging the use of green travel, using low energy appliances, improving access for disabled, etc., in addition to their core activities. This will be considered as part of the scoring of the application. The Council will provide guidance on sustainable development issues if required.

Funding will NOT normally be considered for the following:

Civic events, memorials, donations, fund-raising events, projects which promote religious belief, twinning, individuals, out of area activities, profit organisations, double funding from NDDC sources, projects which cover an area which is the primary responsibility of another funding agency.

MAKING THE GRANTS FUND GO FURTHER

Matched Funding

In its grants funding the Council will be concerned to ensure that the limited amount of grant it can offer is used for maximum benefit to all. This means both assessing the grant application in terms of value for money but also in drawing in funding from outside the area, e.g., from lottery funds, European funds or national grant making bodies.

Council should point groups towards other funding bodies as appropriate. It should not refuse grants purely on the grounds that there might be funding available elsewhere. However, every effort must be made, within the capacity of each applicant, to source funds from a variety of sources.

Amount of Grants Offered

The Council may offer Strategic Grants, and individual Community Councillors Grants of up to 100% of the total cost of a project or service providing they can demonstrate need.

Partnership Working

The Council will not normally fund projects or services that are already offered in the area covered by the application. It will, however, welcome applications from partnerships or consortia, which avoid duplication, or improve or add value to existing work. In these cases a lead organisation must be identified on the application. This organisation will take financial and legal responsibility for the grant offered. The Council may require details of the partners and their financial situation if appropriate.

Information and Advice

The Grants and Funding Officer can provide advice to organisations seeking funding through assisting organisations with grant applications and funding advice. Funding advice is a service that NDDC is keen to promote, and the open access funding database 'North Devon 4 Community' which enables the public to find the most appropriate sources of funding for their project, service or organisation. The database can be accessed via the NDDC website: www.northdevon.gov.uk

STRATEGIC GRANT PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) encompasses a large number of organisations who offer a wide range of services across the District. They are in the best position to provide certain services in comparison to the public and private sector, and the Council aims to commission these essential services that the public rely on. To ensure the longevity and sustainability of these providers, the Council intends to create networks, so larger organisations can work alongside the smaller community and voluntary organisations, without duplicating work, or competing against each other for the same funds.

STRATEGIC GRANTS CO-ORDINATION

The Grants and Funding Officer will co-ordinate the awarding grants and ensure the necessary Service Level Agreements are in place to help monitor the allocated funds are being put towards the services commissioned, and demonstrate value for money.

STRATEGIC GRANTS PROCEDURE

Service delivery of grants will follow a commissioning process and will be in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules as set out in the Council's Constitution and subject of a legal agreement.

North Devon District Council recognises the 'added value' from voluntary sector and there is huge potential for providing services under contract, which may help break new ground and find a great benefit to assisting voluntary organisations and the Council in meeting their core objectives.

North Devon District Council will identify the services needed to support the community of North Devon. These services must meet strategic and corporate priorities of the Council. Grants will be awarded to organisations that already offer an existing service, which will enable them to continue to provide an established provision that the community of North Devon requires.

These organisations, which already provide a valuable service to the public of North Devon, continue to require support both financially and in kind from grant giving organisations. These organisations will be identified through the closer working relationships with the VCS, and will enable the continued service provision of non-statutory services.

COMMUNITY COUNCILLOR GRANTS APPLICATION PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Council will be to ensure that the application procedures are easy and clear to all applicants, while at the same time ensuring sufficient information is gathered to promote value for money, fairness in decision making, public accountability and avoidance of fraud or misuse. These procedures will apply to all grants awarded from the Community Councillor Grants budget. Members will only be able to assist in administering their budget provided that they complete the relevant grants training. District councillors will be able to make recommendations for projects/organisations they feel require grant support.

When there are multiple ward members, each councillor will be allocated an equal amount. Cross-ward working will be permitted. Members will be able to allocated funds in the ward they represent, or another ward, with the relevant member's approval.

GRANT CO-ORDINATION

Within the Council, the Grants and Funding Officer has the responsibility for the overview of the grants process. See Appendix 1 for duties of the Funding and Grants Officer. The Funding and Grants Officer will be supported by case-workers from other units each with expertise in specialist areas, e.g., culture, arts, sports, etc.

THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

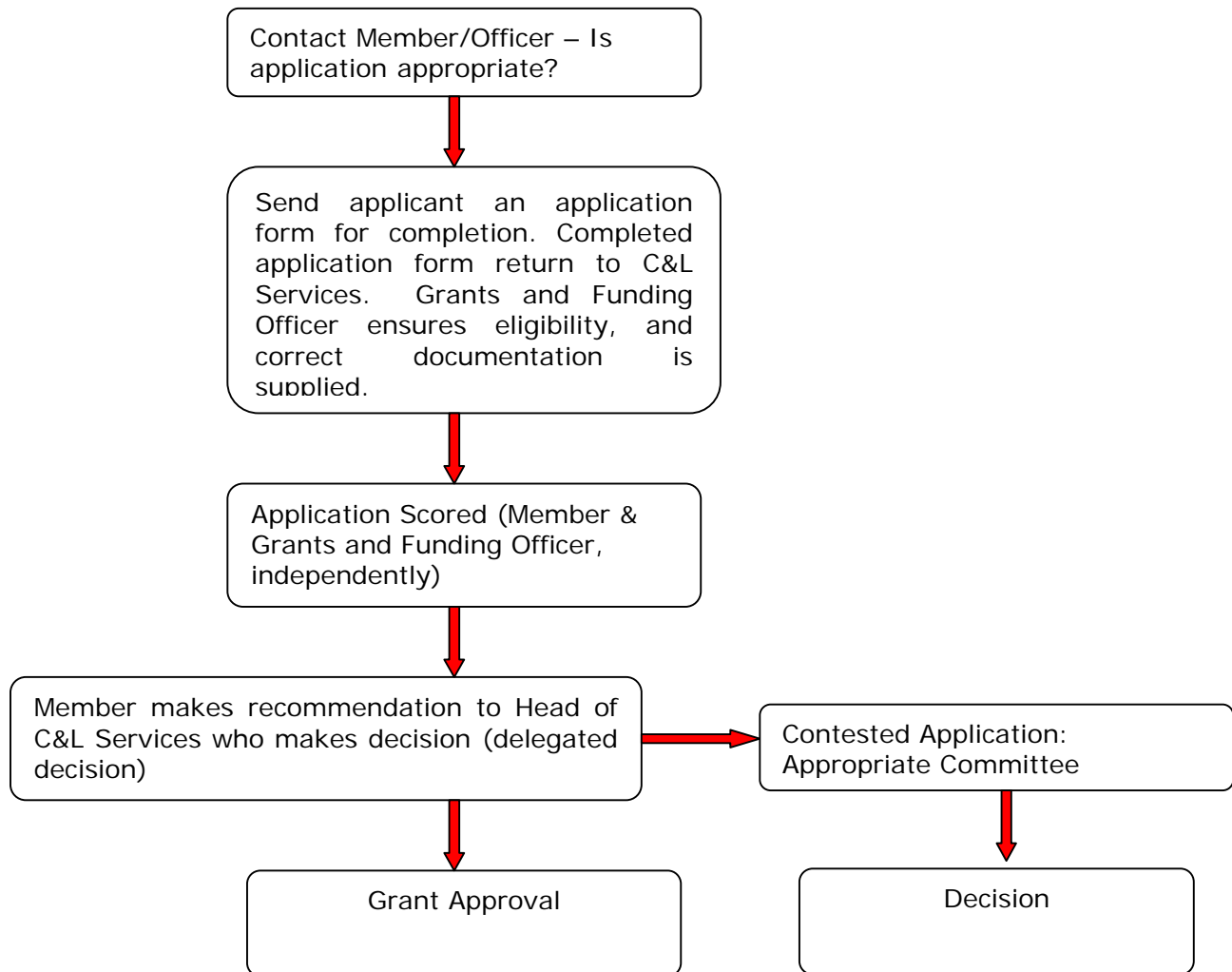
All potential applicants for Community Councillor Grants will be sent an application pack comprising: Application Form, Guidance notes, Eligibility Criteria and Sustainability Checklist. Either the organisation or the councillor within the ward of North Devon area can request an application pack. Alternatively, the pack is available to download on North Devon District Council website: www.northdevon.gov.uk

Applicants are asked to provide contact details, details of the organisation's work, a description of the project or service for which they are applying for grant aid, details of project costs and an indication of the amount of grant required. Applicants are also asked to provide evidence of community need and support for the project, i.e. highlighted in their town or parish plan. Completed application forms must be submitted to the Grants and Funding Officer in Community and Leisure Services, who will ensure the criteria of the scheme have been met. Both the ward member and the Grants and Funding Officer will score the application. Applications that score sufficiently and meet the entry criteria will be recommended to receive a grant. This recommendation will put forward to the Head of Community and Leisure Services, who would make a

decision. In circumstances that the member, and Head of Community and Leisure Services cannot come to an agreement regarding the application, an appropriate committee will resolved any discrepancies. The level of grant recommended will be dependent on the budget allocated to each councillor, the number of applications submitted per electoral ward, and the evidence provided in the application form.

Please see the flowchart below for administration of this fund. Appendix 2 provides a detailed procedure guide for the Community Councillor Grants.

Chart 1: Community Councillor Grants



Guidance Notes

All guidance produced will be -

- Subject to a plain English Audit to ensure that the information it contains is as accessible as possible.

- Dated.
- Distributed with each application form.
- Produced in electronic and paper format.
- Offered in Braille, large print or with translation service (on request).
- Produced to show the support that can be offered by the Council.
- Issued with details of the Standard Conditions attached to grants.
- Issued with details of the timetable for the processing of the application.
- Subject to an Equality and Diversity Audit.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Before an application will be considered, the following criteria must be fulfilled:

- Correctly completed application form accompanied by all requested supporting documentation.
- The proposed project is highlighted within a community action plan, or through extensive community consultation.
- Evidence of project costs, in the form of quotes.
- The project or service must be located in the relevant ward and benefit local residents.
- The project or service must have not for profit aims.
- The project or service must fit with the broad aims of the grant fund as outlined in the application pack.
- The project or service must have due regard to Equal Opportunities and Human rights, or any other legislation, as appropriate.
- The project or service must proactively seek to minimise negative environmental impact.

PUBLICITY STRATEGY

AIM

The aim of the publicity strategy is to promote the Council's grant process, to ensure that the community is aware of the availability of grants and to provide Members with the information they require for promoting the grant application process within their community.

AUDIENCES

- Local community groups/organisations
- NDDC Members
- NDDC Officers

OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the changes to the Grant Strategy and how these changes will affect them
- To ensure that the promotion of grant availability is inclusive and allows equal access and opportunity to all sectors of the community
- To ensure that all local communities receive timely notification of when, how and to whom they must apply
- To encourage two-way communication between the local community and Members and Officers of the Council
- For the scale of promotion and publicity to be delivered according to the level of funding actually available and to manage the expectations of the community
- To provide Members with communications support, information and guidance on the promotion of grants within their communities
- To generate good publicity for the Council

METHODS

Promotion methods will include the issue of press releases, photo calls, articles in North Devon Direct, letters to known community groups and direct Member communications with the community. There will be no funds available for paid advertising of grant availability.

Members will be issued with the information and publicity material necessary to promote grant availability in their community.

The promotion of awards will be co-ordinated by the Council's Communications Officer in conjunction with the Grants and Funding Officer and Ward Member.

All documentation will be made available on the Council website, in Braille, large print and other languages on request, in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity standards.

CONDITIONS

The Council will promote the award of funds to community groups/projects and will expect the co-operation of the recipient. If the recipient is reluctant to participate in publicity without good cause then the award may be withdrawn.

Recipients will be required to acknowledge the Council's support of the project or organisation. The Communications Officer will be available to offer guidance to recipients on the wording of such acknowledgements.

Organisations will not issue their own press releases, detailing the successful application, without consultation and agreement of the Communications Officer.

The Council will have the right to photograph the recipients, beneficiaries or work funded and to show these in Council documentation, publicity and on the web-site. The Council will own copyright of these photographs.

The Council will be concerned in all its publicity to ensure the protection of vulnerable clients of the recipient organisations. It will also take care not to place undue demands on organisations which may already be working at capacity, especially those which are entirely voluntary in nature. In certain cases the right to publicity may be waived.

Organisations that are awarded funding must recognise NDDC's contribution, appropriate to the level of funding and/or project. I.e. where possible displaying a plaque, or ensuring NDDC's logo is incorporated in to all of the organisation's publications, letterhead etc. A percentage of the awarded organisation's will be required to present to a scrutiny committee how the funding from NDDC has contributed towards their organisation, project, service or equipment.

KEY DATES

Publicity will take place at key moments throughout the year. In addition to this there will be publicity opportunities at the completion of community projects funded by the grants process. The Communications Officer, Ward Member and Grants and Funding Officer will manage these on an ad hoc basis.

AUDIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

There is a need for a clear grant process and financial trail for applicants, for audit purposes and for democratic accountability. Applicants need to be notified that their application has been received, when a decision will be made, when payments will be made and what conditions and monitoring procedures will be applied to their grant offer. Procedures and standards provided within this strategy will ensure both the needs of the applicants and the Council are met.

QUALITY STANDARDS

The Grants and Funding Officer will ensure that the following standards will be applied to all applications:

- Requests for application forms to be responded to within 3 working days;
- Acknowledgement of all completed applications within 3 working days;
- Decision to be made within 3 months of the receipt of a correctly completed application for grants; and
- Grant offers or reasons for refusal within 1 month of a decision being made.

CUSTOMER CARE

Support for Applications

The Council is proud of the support it has offered to local organisations in the past, and within limits of resources would wish to continue that service. It is also concerned with helping the voluntary and community sector to meet its own needs and will consider capacity building through mentoring or sign-posting to training opportunities as a priority rather than allocating officers to do work for the community as a general rule. It is also concerned with supporting the voluntary sector infrastructure and does not intend to supplant the support already available through existing organisations.

The support offered to applicants will include:

- Funding Advice;
- Environmental sustainability advice;

- Guidance in completing the Council application forms, especially in ensuring the strategic fit of the application;
- Sign-posting to other organisations that can provide training or support;
- Sign-posting or direct support for community consultation or participation procedures. Direct support will only be provided if the proposal would also inform the community plan; and
- Help-in kind, e.g., meeting room space or photocopying in support of the application.

While every effort will be made to provide this help to all applicants on a fully inclusive basis, the level of support will always be at the discretion of the service manager whose department is offering the service.

AFTER CARE

Offer Conditions

Within one month of an award being made the applicant will receive an offer in writing which will include:

- The amount of grant offered; and
- Two copies of the Funding Agreement detailing conditions of funding. Both copies to be signed, and one copy be returned by the applicant to NDDC.

The Funding Agreement contain must the following details:

- Period for which the offer is valid;
- Final date by which the money is to be spent;
- Publicity arrangements;
- Monitoring Arrangements/allocate monitoring officer;
- Funding or Service Level Agreements, where applicable;
- Payment by instalments/Conditions for claiming e.g. evidence of expenditure;
- Acceptance form;
- Once the acceptance form has been returned then monitoring project evaluation forms will be supplied; and

- Offer letters for Strategic and Community Councillor Grants will be sent out by the Grants and Funding Officer in Community and Leisure Services.

Unsuccessful applications

All unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback on the reasons for the failure of the grant application within 3 weeks of the committee decision. In addition, unsuccessful applicants will be informed about the open access funding database, 'North Devon 4 Community' whereby funding searches can be performed, to identify alternative potential funding sources.

Letters to unsuccessful applicants for Strategic Grants and the Community Councillor Grants will be sent out by the Grants and Funding Officer in Community and Leisure Services.

Unsuccessful applicants will be unable to submit a new or revised application until the following financial year, unless requested to do so by the appropriate Committee.

Grant Payment

In general, grants will be paid on completion of a project and in receipt of a completed Project Evaluation Form and evidence of expenditure, for example: receipted invoices, wage slips, cash books, bank statements. However, the Council understands that in many instances groups may have an immediate need for funds and that payment only on completion of a project would present them with financial difficulties. In recognition of this, up to 80% of the grant may be paid in advance, provided that the applicant supplies proof of need e.g. in the form of a cash-flow forecast. The remaining 20% will be held back until the project has been completed.

In addition, where the grant is towards the general running costs of a service, staged payments may be made throughout the year. In these instances, the grant payment arrangements will be agreed with the recipient of the grant and will generally be supported by a service level agreement.

Payment of grant money will only be made on receipt of an invoice from the grant recipient

MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

The system will be monitored using service level agreements and/or project-evaluation form and site visits as appropriate to the size and type of project or organisation supported. A system needs to be put in place to ensure that the Council receives and measures value for money.

Monitoring

Monitoring and Evaluation are an integral aspect of good grant making. Appropriate monitoring reduces the risk of misuse of funding, secures value for money, demonstrates achievement and provides feedback for future programmes and schemes.

The monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in a manner, which minimises the burden on the recipient and procedures will be more rigorous depending on the amount awarded. The following is the minimum requirement for each grant:

- All grants will be subject to a Funding Agreement. The agreement sets out the conditions of the grant including the date for final completion;
- Organisations in receipt of grants will also be expected to complete a Project Evaluation Form. This will allow monitoring and evaluation of the grant making process and ensure that grant funds are utilised appropriately and in line with the Council's strategic aims.
- Grants over £5,000 will be subject to a service level agreement, which will include key milestones, targets for the project and outputs to be achieved in order to receive staged payments. It will also include a programme of monitoring visits and a final date for completion.

If at the time of review the Council feels that the organisation is failing to meet its performance targets or requirement of funding, the Council shall be entitled to reduce or withdraw from any or all of the further grant instalments due to be paid.

Evaluation

A project-evaluation form is required for use by the recipient organisation for all awards. This will complement the monitoring arrangements and enable the Council to evaluate the success of the programme. Awards over £5,000 will also be required to produce a final report. The detail of which will be part of the Service Level Agreement.

Misuse of Funds

Should the Council become aware through its monitoring and evaluation procedures that improper use of grant aid has occurred deliberately, i.e., through fraud, no further grants will be made to that organisation and monies will be recovered.

Failure to Meet Targets

In cases of failure to meet stated outputs, every case will be considered on its merits and where failure could have been prevented, advice will be provided. Any organisation experiencing difficulties will be encouraged to contact their caseworker for assistance at the earliest possible date.

TRACKING GRANTS

In the auditing process the following need to be taken into account:

- Officer time spent on the advising and evaluating each application;
- Elimination of the possibility of double funding from different Council grant funds;
- Elimination of the potential for fraud;
- Clear tracking of payments against work done;
- Ensuring that monitoring arrangements are carried out; and
- Evaluation of individual awards.

This will require the establishment of centralised tracking for all grants through the Council's FMS, time, care and other systems as appropriate. All officers working on grants will need to use the compatible systems and criteria for data entry. To ensure the process works effectively the Grants and Funding Officer will be responsible for the overview and ensuring that the system is correctly used.

PUBLIC REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMME

Within six months of the end of the financial year the Grants and Funding Officer will prepare a report on all the grants considered by the Council in the previous year. The report will include a list of all organisations receiving grants, the amount of award and current status of the project or service. It will include a list of all grants applications and scoring, including those refused. It will also provide an evaluation of how far the awards have contributed towards meeting Council priorities.

The following performance indicators will be applied and included in the annual report:

- Percentage of applications processed within the quality standards;
- Percentage of grants approved;

- Number of Voluntary and Community sector groups benefiting from awards; and
- Percentage of groups satisfied with the grant administration process.

APPENDIX 1

DUTIES OF GRANTS AND FUNDING OFFICER

- Develop application forms, guidance notes and publicity material for the awards scheme.
- Ensure material can be made available in a form to suit all users, e.g., Braille.
- Develop project evaluation forms for individual applicants.
- Develop evaluation procedures for use by caseworkers or officers with relevant knowledge and expertise.
- Develop a procedure to evaluate effectiveness and value for money of the Council's grant programme.
- Ensure that all applicants receive proper documentation and feedback.
- Ensure that fully documented records of each award are maintained, up to and including the final evaluation of the grant.
- Produce and publish an annual report on all Council grants within six months of the end of each financial year.
- Provide guidance to case- workers/officers with relevant expertise producing funding and service level agreements.
- Keep an overview of all funding and service level agreements to ensure that fair and equitable monitoring systems are in place.
- Brief staff or ensure training on procedures is provided to all involved in the grants process.
- Brief members on the grants process and ensure that they are fully aware of their role.

APPENDIX 2 COMMUNITY COUNCILLOR GRANTS PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

