

Minutes of a meeting of the Keighley Area Committee held on Thursday, 15 December 2016 at Council Chamber - Keighley Town Hall

Commenced 1800
Concluded 1900

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	THE INDEPENDENTS	INDEPENDENT
Ali Brown Mallinson BM Smith	M Slater Bacon Farley	Hawkesworth	Morris

Councillor Ali in the Chair

43. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

44. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

45. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions submitted by the public.

46. THE ALLOCATION OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDING GRANTS (EXTENDED COMMUNITY CENTRE CORE COSTS)

The report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Sport (**Document “V”**) set out the Community Building Grants allocation process. The report reminded Members that Community Building Grants were for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to support them in meeting their associated building related costs.

It was acknowledged that the issue had been deferred at the meeting on 24



November 2016 as Members had requested that additional information be provided.

The report discussed at the meeting on 24 November 2016 had informed Members that as part of the budget decision on the 25th February 2016, it had been agreed to reduce the discretionary support available to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. Following a review, by the VCS Buildings Support Group, it was proposed to merge the support available into one Community Building Grant. The decision making process for that grant would be devolved to Area Committees in recognition of their local knowledge and to increase fairness, transparency and accountability.

Document “V” explained how the Review Group had determined the allocations to each area and that this was modelled on core costs and community development. It had been acknowledged, however, that using that formula some areas with disproportionate allocations may be unable to cope. Allocations had, therefore, been made on a 50% needs and 50% current allocation basis. The Review Group’s recommendation had been agreed by the Regeneration, Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder on behalf of the Council Executive. The legitimacy of that approval had been questioned at the meeting on 24 November 2016 and the legality of that decision was confirmed in the report being discussed.

Appended to Document “V” was the Community Buildings Grant application process and consultation report. It was explained that those documents had been despatched to applicants and some completed applications had been returned.

Members raised a number of issues including:-

- The previous report did not contain details of organisations across the district in receipt of assistance and the current amounts allocated. Despite a request that the information be provided Document “V” did not include that detail. That information would be useful to provide an indication of duplication and the services which could be amalgamated to make efficiencies. The information would also aid Member decision making.
- Additional points made at the meeting in November had not been addressed including a view that the decision that Bradford West Area Committee should be responsible for allocating funds to organisations supporting district wide activities and community of interest groups could be biased towards groups in the Bradford West area.
- The statement in the report that grants would be available for two years should be conveyed to applicants as the claim that funding was available subject to budget cuts was misleading.
- The language used on the Expression of Interest forms was unclear. Statements advising that the funding would be available to ‘everyone’ and



'young people' was felt to be confusing..

- The application process documentation should be written in plain English. The current documents were confusing and contradictory.
- The eligibility criteria referred to groups with substantial reserves. Groups could be penalised for saving for the future. Who determined the amount of reserves which were classed as substantial?
- What advice and training had been given to the Area Co-ordinator's staff to work with applicants to consider alternative sources of support?
- If groups occupied buildings which were sub standard who would be responsible for their repair?
- The way Bradford South's allocation had been made was not clear.
- A definition of need used in assessing applications was required.
- Members were disappointed that the questions asked at the previous meeting did not appear to have been answered and did not understand how the allocations were made to each Area Committee.
- Why wasn't there an even split of funding between each constituency area? Bradford South had been allocated the smallest overall budget but had, proportionally, the smallest percentage reduction.
- Had Bradford South been rewarded because they had been frugal?
- Who had designed the formula applied to allocate funding?
- Was it correct that there was less community focus in the Bradford South area.
- The application forms had to be signed by the Chair and Management Committees of applicant groups. Had any consideration been given to the groups' cycle of meetings? Was January 2017 the absolute cut off for applications to be considered?

Corresponding responses were provided as follows:-

- A list of organisations in receipt of assistance across the Keighley Ward was available but officers had been unaware of the request for a district wide record.
- All Area Committee Chairs would meet, as a Grants Advisory Group, to approve allocating funds to organisations supporting district wide activities



and community of interest groups.

- There were no proposals to remove the funding available. There was a standard item on the application advising that the funding was “*subject to CBMDC VCS 2018-19 budget remaining unchanged*” as a contingency.
- Officers would evaluate applications, however, it would be for the Grants Advisory Group to decide if groups were eligible. There was no specific formula to ascertain if reserves were substantial. If groups were saving for specific purposes the Grants Advisory Group would be advised to take that into consideration.
- An information session had been provided for all Ward officers where they had been introduced to colleagues from Revenues and Benefits and Estate Management to help them deal with applicants. It was agreed that briefing notes; a presentation and officer contacts could be shared with Members. Email requests for that information should be made to the Keighley Area Co-ordinator.
- Each buildings lease was unique to that property. Some leases stipulated that the tenants were responsible for repair and others stated that repairs and maintenance were the responsibility of the Council. Officers in Estates and Property Services would assist and advise groups.
- The Review Group had made the decision on allocations to each Area Committee. Their decision was made using the formula detailed in Document “V”. That formula considered a combination of need and existing distribution of building related benefits. The needs element of that method was the previous allocation for community centre core costs and community development. An even 50% split between needs and existing distribution of building related benefits was applied.
- Demand for Community Business Grants was likely to reflect to some extent the current distribution. The Review Group had felt, however, that this should be balanced with the need for community spaces across the District.
- Fewer organisations which received rent subsidies, core costs and discretionary rate relief were located in the Bradford South area and that was the reason it had received the smallest allocation and, therefore, the smallest percentage reduction. Not all areas had been cut by 50% and the percentage reduction varied based on need and historical allocations.
- Bradford South constituency had not been rewarded for being frugal. When the decision to reduce voluntary and community sector grants had been made three funding streams had been combined. A fair allocation process had been designed and had been based on 50% of what those groups had received previously and to compensate for need the way



previous allocations had been made was considered. Inevitably there would be a different percentage reduction for each area. Many factors were used to assess need including the number of older people in each location.

- The needs element of the calculation had been agreed by the Executive in the report about Devolution of Commissioning of Community Development and Community Centre Core Cost Grants to Area Committees on 22 July 2014. That decision had been communicated to Area Committees over two years ago.
- Elected Members in the Bradford South constituency did have a strong focus on communities.
- It was acknowledged that the timescale for receipt of completed applications had been shorter than desired. Officers had only been given five weeks to provide the documentation. The deadline had been extended from 21 December 2016 to allow for the Christmas and New Year holidays. In order for grants to be awarded by 1 April 2017 they must be considered by the Area Committees in February 2017. A key event timetable was contained in Document “V”.

In response to discussions about the possibility of groups missing the deadline for receipt of applications it was agreed to provide a reminder to those groups which expressed an interest and had not returned their applications.

Resolved –

- (1) That the proposed allocation process for Community Building Grants be noted.**
- (2) That the Keighley Area Coordinator be requested to organise meetings of the Area Committee’s Grant Advisory Group to consider Community Building Grant applications for funding from groups within the Keighley Area.**
- (3) That the Keighley Area Coordinator be requested to provide a further report to a meeting within the 2016-17 municipal year with recommendations from the Grant Advisory Group on how to allocate the Community Building Grants funds available.**
- (4) That the Strategic Director, Environment and Sport, be requested to provide all Ward Members with details of groups who currently receive support from all wards within the Bradford District.**
- (5) That the Keighley Area Co-ordinator be requested to ensure that all groups who have requested details of the Community Building Grant**



in the Keighley Constituency area be informed of the impending 9 January 2017 deadline for receipt of Expression of Interest forms.

Overview and Scrutiny Area: Corporate

Action: Strategic Director, Environment and Sport

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Keighley Area Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

