

Consultation on member awarded funding

South Gloucestershire Council has previously awarded grants through its Local Area Committees to voluntary groups; charities; and Town & Parish Councils in the form of community grants. In February, the Council agreed to replace community grants in this form with a scheme of Member Awarded Funding. This consultation enables affected groups and organisations to influence the way in which this new scheme will operate.

It is essential to ensure that this new scheme meets the Council's legal obligations, and that it provides transparency and clarity for local groups. The scheme also needs to safeguard public funding in a proportionate manner. These factors have been taken into account in developing the proposals contained in this consultation.

This consultation is open from 21 April 2016 until 15 July 2016.

The results of this consultation, and proposals for the new scheme, will then be considered prior to adoption by the Council.

Have your say

You can tell us your views by completing the consultation survey (also available online) or:

- Visit our website: www.southglos.gov.uk/consultation
- Email consultation@southglos.gov.uk
- Write to: FREEPOST RTCT-JXLE-EETT, South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research and Consultation Team, Member Awarded Funding, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, BRISTOL, BS15 9TR
- Phone: 01454 868154

Copies of this consultation document and survey are also available on request or from your local library or one stop shop. If you would like someone to talk to your group or organisation about these proposals, please contact us using the details above to arrange.

Proposed principles of the new Member Awarded Funding

To enable the new Member Awarded Funding to be allocated, a number of basic principles are proposed, and are laid out below. We would welcome your comments on these principles or any additional ones that you think maybe necessary as part of this consultation.

- 1 All South Gloucestershire Councillors will be allocated an equal amount of Member Awarded Funding annually dependent on budget provision.
- 2 There will be no separation of Member Awarded Funding into separate capital and revenue streams. Revenue budget provision of some £280,000 could be available in 2016/17 though there is no guarantee that the same (or any) budget provision will be available in subsequent years.
- 3 Members will have the option of individually awarding all their annual funding to a single organisation / purpose, or dividing it amongst a number of agencies though there will be a minimum level of £500.
- 4 Members will be able to combine their individual fund with other Councillors at their discretion in order to provide greater support to a particular scheme in a given year.
- 5 Members can agree to fund a project for a year; and may indicate an intention to fund the project on a reoccurring basis for more than one year. Groups must be aware that future funding cannot be guaranteed and is subject to the Council's annual budget decisions. Any funds uncommitted in a financial year will not be available for future years.
- 6 Member Awarded Funding can be used in the following ways
 - a) To secure local delivery of additional non-recurring council services where there is a localism element to delivery standards (i.e. to top up service provision for the current year) or to fund services during the year from other public bodies.
 - b) As a contribution to, or as match funding for, local projects
 - c) As a non-recurring grant to voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE) groups or town and parish councils.
- 7 In order to ensure decisions are lawful, rational and procedurally compliant, a process is required to ensure that funding is only given to bona fide groups; that the purposes for which funding is awarded are clear; and that an audit trail of the process is in place before funds are released to a successful group. We will try to make that process as simple and proportionate as possible.
- 8 To that end a list of "pre-approved" VCSE groups who meet the current grants registration requirements of financial stability; governance; compliance with statutory policies for equalities and safeguarding, will be made available to members. VCSE groups will be required to register and maintain their details. If members wish to allocate funding to a group who have not registered and received approval; the award will not be paid until the registration requirements have been met by the group. Town & Parish Councils, public bodies, Registered Charities and South

Gloucestershire Council services are deemed to be automatically eligible unless specifically identified as not meeting appropriate standards of financial stability and probity.

- 9 Members cannot fund organisations in which they (or their immediate family) have a financial interest, or for financial gain.
- 10 If and when a Councillor agrees to fund a particular piece of work a very simple application form describing the purpose of the funding will be completed in order to provide an audit trail of the decision. This form will also enable applicants/Members to indicate how the work to be funded will support objectives within the Council Plan 2016 / 2020.
- 11 Completed forms, signed by a Councillor who has agreed to fund a particular application will be sent by the Councillor to the Council's grants team for recording and processing. If Councillors agree to combine their individual fund, an endorsement from all involved Councillors must be submitted to the Council's grants team in support.
- 12 Payments will be made in advance of project delivery though if the money is match-funding for a larger project proof of availability of the other funding will be required in advance of the award release. If a scheme does not go ahead, or the money is used for a purpose other than that originally agreed the funding will need to be repaid.
- 13 So long as the requirements of this system are satisfied there will be no process for appealing against a Member's decision.
- 14 Information on money awarded by each Councillor (date of award; who it has been awarded to; purpose) will be published on the Council's website in order to meet its legal obligations under the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.
- 15 Monitoring of spend by funded organisations will be undertaken by the Council on a proportionate basis.
- 16 The following existing exclusions and restrictions will continue to apply:
 - awards cannot be made during the election or Purdah
 - following an election, funds will be released after the confirmation of election results, completion of enrolment (including induction), and will be subject to confirmation of the continuing availability of the grants budget for that year
 - where the election is as a result of a by-election, only the remaining balance of the Member allocation for that seat for that financial year will be available to the incoming Member
 - awards cannot be made to individuals
 - awards cannot be made for political purposes or gain
 - awards cannot be made that fuel or support any radicalisation/terrorist activity or to any proscribed organisations
 - awards cannot be made retrospectively
 - the spend of money awarded will be subject to audit

**Please make any comments about these proposed principles.
It would be helpful if you could quote the principle number in your response.**

Should the council consider any other principles when allocating Member Awarded Funding?

Area Wide Grants

In addition to the general principles outlined, there is a specific option which the Council is keen to hear your views on

The scheme set out above is intended to allow Members to use their knowledge of services and challenges within their Wards to direct funding to areas of greatest priority. However some requests for support/provision may cover a much wider area.

We would like views on whether the money available for Member Awarded Funding should be reduced in order to enable a fund to be available and used for Area Wide Grants.

Should the money available for Member Awarded Funding be reduced in order to enable a fund to be available and used for Area Wide Grants?

Yes No Don't know

If Yes, how much should be available for Area Wide Grants?

Please make any other comments about the availability or allocation of area wide grants.

Other Questions

What impact would the operation of Member Awarded Funding have on you, your group or organisation, its work or the wider community?

Please tell us your full postcode:

Are you responding as?

- A local voluntary, community or social enterprise organisation
- A South Gloucestershire Councillor
- A Parish or Town Council
- A local resident or council tax payer
- A local business
- Other, please specify:

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us its name:

This section is really important as it helps us to gain a better understanding of the needs of different people and how they could be impacted by any changes. This information will remain confidential and will be used for analysis purposes only. Your personal information will not be published and individuals will not be identified. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation you do not need to answer these questions.

Are you? Female Male Prefer not to say

How old are you?

18 or under 19 to 24 25 to 44 45 to 64
 65 to 74 Over 75 Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to be disabled? Yes No Prefer not to say

Please tell us your ethnic origin?

Thank you for taking part in this consultation, please return your completed survey by 15 July 2016 to:

FREEPOST RTCT-JXLE-EETT,
South Gloucestershire Council,
Corporate Research and Consultation Team, Member Awarded Funding,
Civic Centre, High Street,
Kingswood,
BRISTOL, BS15 9TR