

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

3 MARCH 2005

COMMUNITY REVENUE AWARDS 2005/06 – WINCHESTER LIVE AT HOME SCHEME

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB747 - Community Grants – Policy and Review 2004/05 - 3 December 2003

CAB826 - Community Grants – Revenue Awards 2004/05 - 3 March 2004

WTF29 - Community Grants – Capital and Revenue Grants 2004/05 - 18 May 2004

WTF42 - Community Grants – Revenue Awards 2005/06 - 6 January 2005

CAB1013 - Community Grants – Revenue Awards 2005/06 - 8 February 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Town Forum requested further information regarding the Winchester Live at Home Scheme to enable a final decision on the value of revenue grant award to be allocated to the organisation for 2005/06.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Forum agree to recommend to Cabinet the level of grant award to the Winchester Live at Home Scheme up to a maximum amount of £5,000 subject to the following conditions:

- a) That the grant is expressly for 2005/06 only with no commitment secured at this stage for funding in future years.
- b) That the organisation, working with the Partnership and External Funding

Officer, develop a funding strategy for the next three years.

- c) That the grant award is made conditional on funding being secured from Social Services. Town Forum may wish to apply a minimal level for this.

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DETAIL:

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This report sets out details of the revenue grant application made by The Winchester Live at Home Scheme. At its meeting on 6 January 2005, The Town Forum agreed a provision budget allocation of up to £5,000 subject to further clarification on the activities and requirements of the organisation.
- 2.2 The original application form and supporting documentation are held in the Central Business Unit of the Community Services Department. Any Member wishing to study the form prior to the meeting should contact the Partnership and External Funding Officer who will make the necessary arrangements.

3 Winchester Live at Home Scheme

- 3.1 The scheme has been operational in Winchester since 2004 and is run under the auspices of Methodist Homes for the Aged. The overall aim of the scheme seeks to improve support and services for older people (aged 65 years+) in central Winchester who are socially isolated and housebound.
- 3.2 The scheme provides two main services - a one-to-one Befriending Service and a group based Friendship Club. A total of 29 people currently access the services, with the majority in the 81 – 90 age range.
- 3.3 The basis of the befriending scheme is support through regular one-to-one visits to the client's home by matched / suitable volunteers. These are usually weekly and of one to two hours in duration. The impact of the support is to reduce isolation through regular social contact, opportunities to share personal concerns and needs, assistance with small tasks including shopping, transport to appointments and form filling, early observation of developing physical & mental health issues and signposting to other support agencies as appropriate / necessary.
- 3.4 The Friendship Club offers a means of reducing social isolation by providing regular social contact through fortnightly meetings backed up by interim contact via the telephone or by letter. Meetings are on average 2–3 hours long and create an intimate and safe environment where people are made to feel welcome and that someone is taking a genuine interest in their lives. The meetings often include stimulating talks and topics have included falls prevention, crime reduction, pension credits and Shopmobility, as well as more 'fun' activities including poetry and clay sculpting.

- 3.5 Both services are offered free of charge with the voluntary donations towards refreshments and a small charge towards transport to the Friendship Club (arranged through Dial-a-Ride).

4 Financial Status

- 4.1 An application for £10,000 of revenue grant was submitted by the organisation. This figure represented the anticipated budget shortfall expected by the organisation in 2004/05 and this deficit is expected to be mirrored in the budget for 2005/06.
- 4.2 The annual budget for the two services is approximately £27,000 of which it is anticipated £11,000 will be raised through donations and fundraising. The organisation anticipates that the balance, where possible, will need to be met through grants from both statutory bodies and charitable trusts. The maximum amount expected from Social Services is £5,000 (and this is considered an optimistic estimate). Income from service users in terms of donations etc totals approximately £500 per year.
- 4.3 Since the scheme was established in 2000, it has been funded by a mix of grants from statutory bodies (mainly Social Services), personal giving, fundraising and donations from charitable trusts, organisations and local churches. Shortfalls in the last two years have been met from reserves that the scheme was able to build up in earlier years, however it is anticipated that these will be almost exhausted by the end of the current financial year (March 2005).

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 At the meeting of the Town Forum on 6 January a provisional budget of up to £5,000 was earmarked for this organisation. This has subsequently been endorsed by Cabinet (8 February) and the Town Forum, on receipt of this report, are able to agree a grant award up to that maximum.
- 5.2 Whilst there can be no doubt that the organisation provides an excellent and much needed service within the town, concerns should be noted with regard to the annual decrease in the Hampshire County Council Social Services funding. It is a clear factor in the assessment of grant applications that City Council should not be used to replace cuts in other statutory funding and continued cuts in Social Services funding coupled with increased requests to the City Council may not be appropriate if the organisation applies to the City Council in future years. There are also concerns relating to the medium to long term reliance of the organisation on funding from the Town Forum / City Council. As Members will be aware the reserves currently available and enabling increased grant awards may not be available in future and caution should be exercised to ensure the organisation does not assume a continuing commitment for the Town Forum beyond any award made in 2005/06.
- 5.3 It is clear from the application that the funding deficit for the organisation, which currently stands at £10,000, is likely to worsen even with financial support next financial year from the Town Forum. As with many community and voluntary groups, for their service to be sustainable, they need to be forward planning in terms of both their budgets and potential sources of income. From the paperwork supporting the application it is not clear whether such a medium term process is in place and consideration should be given to actively encouraging this.

- 5.4 As a result of the above concerns it is recommended that the following conditions are considered and applied as the Town Forum see appropriate to any grant award:
- a) That the grant is expressly for 2005/06 only with no commitment secured at this stage for funding in future years.
 - b) That the organisation, working with the Partnership and External Funding Officer, develop a funding strategy for the next three years
 - c) That the grant award is made conditional on funding being secured from Social Services. Town Forum may wish to apply a minimal level for this.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

6 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 6.1 The community grants scheme is of direct relevance to a number of key objectives and priority areas: -
- ☐ Working with and supporting the voluntary sector to deliver the most appropriate services for local communities - Corporate Priority
 - ☐ Helping the voluntary sector to provide better services to the community - Cultural Strategy
 - ☐ Recognising the importance of small-scale community facilities and services and support these wherever possible - Cultural Strategy.
 - ☐ Providing more and better leisure opportunities which meet the needs of young people and people after retirement - Cultural Strategy
- 6.2 The current application from this organisation also contributes to the Community Strategy and in particular the Health and Well-being theme.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 Resources issues are identified in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

None