

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

24 April 2012

Report of the Chief Executive

COMMUNITY ACTION CAPITAL GRANTS

(LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE)

Purpose of the Report

To seek approval to the criteria for a Community Action Capital Grants scheme to support community self help action across the county.

Information and Analysis

The Local Government Act 2000 has placed community leadership at the heart of modern local government and aims to ensure that local authorities are accountable, open and responsive to local needs.

Subsequent White Papers and legislation including “Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities”, “Communities in control: real people, real power” and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 have also had significant implications for the council and its community leadership role.

All this previous discussion and legislation provides the foundation for “Building the Big Society” proposals put forward by the Government, which aim to put more power and opportunity into the hands of local people.

The aim of the recent Localism Act is to give citizens, communities and local government the power and information that they need to come together and solve the problems they face, recognising that only when people and communities are given more power and take more responsibility can fairness and opportunity be achieved for all. The Best Value Statutory Guidance on support for the voluntary sector complements the provisions in the Act.

Over the last 10 years the council has made significant progress in consulting, engaging and involving local people in shaping, influencing and delivering services across the county including the:

- Members Community Leadership Scheme
- Community Priorities Programme
- Youth Opportunities and Capital Funds

- Bringing People Together Fund
- Citizen Panel consultation
- Budget consultation events
- Closer co-operation with Town and Parish Councils
- Community Forums across the county
- 50+, Youth and BME Forums

The Council Plan places considerable emphasis on the council's role in leading the way in Derbyshire, shaping the development and delivery of excellent quality services for local people and communities. A key priority in the Plan is to give local people better choice and more of a say, especially doing more to make people in the county feel that they can have an influence on matters that affect their daily lives.

Other Plan priorities are aimed at achieving more in partnership and working with, and supporting, local communities to develop the skills, confidence and capacity to help them flourish. Celebrating what is good about communities and showing what can be achieved when people work together is a key thrust. Moreover the Plan places considerable emphasis on the role of the voluntary and community sector, being an essential part of the way in which the authority shapes and delivers its services more efficiently.

Building on this policy framework and previous initiatives the Council created the Community Action Grants and Sports Action Grants schemes. In addition, Council agreed at the budget meeting in February 2012 the allocation of up to £1million to create a Community Action Capital Grants scheme.

The aim of the scheme is to provide one-off capital grants to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of local communities. The proposed criteria for the allocation of the grants are set out below:

- Support partnerships of properly constituted local organisations to help bring communities closer together
- Contribute to the development of multi-use capital projects such as community or sports facilities which will be used by the public over at least a ten year period
- Give priority to partnerships that have raised resources locally on a 'self help' basis towards the new project being proposed
- Provide a minimum of £10k and maximum of £250k towards the total capital costs detailed in a viable business plan
- Support projects that can demonstrate sustainability in terms of future running costs

- Support projects that are well developed and can be started in the next 12-18 months

#### Legal considerations

The proposed creation of a Community Action Capital Grants Fund is enabled by Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, known as the well-being power. The well-being power provides local authorities with the discretion to do anything that is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area. The power can be used to provide financial assistance to any person. As is required by the well-being power, the proposals contained in the report have also been formulated having regard to statutory guidance and the provisions of the Council Plan.

#### Financial considerations

The capital grants will be available to contribute towards buildings, building improvements, substantial items of equipment and plant, or other tangible assets, subject to conditions with regard to maintenance and disposal of grant funded assets.

#### Other considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, human rights, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

#### Key Decision

No

#### Call-In

It is required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report? – No

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That criteria for a Community Action Capital Grants Fund be agreed as detailed in the report.
2. That the Chief Executive be asked to develop an appropriate grant application procedure and publicity.
3. That evaluation/monitoring reports be brought to Cabinet at appropriate intervals.

**NICK HODGSON  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**