



GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL – 14TH DECEMBER 2011

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – AMENDMENTS TO CRITERIA

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- 1.1 At its meeting on 13th October 2011, the Panel agreed that, as a result of the underspend of the budget in 2010/11 and the potential for a similar outcome for 2011/12, officers would report to the next meeting on a suggested range of revised criteria to be implemented, initially, for the financial year 2012/13.
- 1.2 The proposal is to increase the amounts awarded within the general criteria to ensure that, in the current financial climate, the best use is made of the budget available.
- 1.3 Depending on the success of any advertising carried out by GAVO and the subsequent take-up of financial assistance awards, it may be possible to continue any increased criteria into future years, but the awards may have to revert to the current criteria to stay within budget once any underspend has been utilised.
- 1.4 Members are reminded that the general criteria awards are only part of the sums granted by this Panel (approximately 67% for 2008/09). Therefore, in addition to increasing the general criteria, Members also have the opportunity to increase the sums awarded by the Panel.

2. CRITERIA

- 2.1 The current general criteria for awarding financial assistance are listed below:-

Annual Award	£
(a) OAP Association with own building	250
(b) OAP Association without own building	130
(c) Junior Sports Club	45 per number of members
(d) Individuals representing Wales at home	130
(e) Individuals representing Wales overseas	250
(f) Jazz Bands	70
(g) Choirs	70
(h) Scout/cubs/brownies/guides/boys brigade/crusaders	45 per number of members
(i) St John Ambulance:-	
Cadets	70 per number of members
Badgers	45 per number of members
(j) Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCA's with own premises	470
(k) Youth Associations without own premises	45 per number of members
(l) Brass and Silver Bands	500
(m) Allotment Associations	50

- 2.2 Applications under these headings are dealt with under delegated powers and reported to the Panel for information. All other applications are treated on their merits and reported to the

Panel for decision.

3. VARIABLE CRITERIA

- 3.1 Within the list of criteria shown above are several which are based on the number of members, with the award being granted on multiples of the basic figure e.g. three times £45
- 3.2 This system is unwieldy in that it is difficult for officers to be certain that these awards are equitably distributed. For example, in the case of a Junior Sports Club, an assumption has to be made whether to award on the total number of members, the number of appropriate teams that the club could realistically field or some other, perhaps slightly arbitrary, calculation.
- 3.3 Therefore, as part of this review, it is suggested that Members consider a table of less 'uncertain' criteria to replace the current £45 per member basis, which, in reality is not per member. Clearly there could initially be 'winners and losers' in this approach but, in the long-term, it should be more equitable and easier to administer.
- 3.4 Suggested values are included in the appendix.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 For the purposes of arriving at an estimate of the cost of increasing the value of each criterion, officers have used outturn figures from 2008/09 which was the last 'normal' year with regard to the number of applications.
- 4.2 The resultant figures, shown in Appendix 1, can only give an indication of the outcome of any decision by Members as it is dependent on the overall number of applications. The values shown as awarded by the Panel are for illustration purposes only, as it is for the Panel to decide on the sums to be granted on the basis of the individual applications.
- 4.3 Members may wish to propose other values at the meeting.

5. OPERATIONAL CHANGES

- 5.1 As the Panel meets approximately quarterly, it is proposed to allow officers to process awards under the general criteria on a more frequent basis to ensure that applicants receive the awards within a more appropriate timescale. It is often the case that applicants who are representing Wales find that the award is made after the event due to the timing of meetings. Clearly, in times of financial hardship, it may be difficult for the applicant to fund the costs of attending the event without the aid of the grant.
- 5.2 However, it is proposed that the Panel will be advised of the schedule of grants to be paid by e-mail in order that Members are able to make any Declarations of Interest before the awards are made.
- 5.3 Members may also wish to consider the 'signing-off' of the schedule by the Chair as is the current practice with the Welsh Church Fund grants.

6. WELSH CHURCH FUND

- 6.1 Members were advised at the October meeting that, due to the considerable underspends in previous years, the revised budget for 2011/12 is some £170k.
- 6.2 Monmouthshire CC have confirmed that there is no individual limit on WCF award and, therefore, the Panel may wish to consider increasing the maximum grant to be awarded to

make full use of the funds available. Currently the maximum amount which may be granted is £1,500.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Whilst it is unlikely that there will be any clawback of underspends in the near future, clearly, unless some action is taken in the short-term, there will be an ongoing 'surplus' which could potentially be lost at some future date if local authority budgets are further eroded due to central government cut-backs.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The financial implications are those set out in the foregoing report

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Member views are sought regarding:

- The criteria to be applied for 2012/13 and future years.
- The change to operational procedures relating to awards under the General Criteria.

Author: A. Morgan – Group Accountant (Revenue Advice and Support)

Consultees: N. Scammell – Head of Corporate Finance

N. Roberts – Principal Group Accountant (Financial Advice and Support)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Criteria Proposal