



## CABINET – 28TH MARCH 2018

**SUBJECT: WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM HEAD OF CORPORATE FINANCE & ACTING SECTION 151 OFFICER**

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- 1.1. The attached report was presented at an informal meeting of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel (the Panel) on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
  - 1.2. The Monmouthshire Welsh Church Act Fund (WCAF) was established on the 1st April 1996 from the former Gwent Fund and part of the former Mid Glamorgan Fund. The Fund covers the administrative areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Torfaen and Monmouthshire, with Monmouthshire being designated as the lead Authority. Details of the charitable purposes for which the funding may be applied are set out in Appendix 1 of the attached report.
  - 1.3. Caerphilly CBC receives an annual allocation of circa £62k from Monmouthshire County Council and as this allocation has not been fully spent in previous years it is currently anticipated that a balance of £263k will be carried forward into the 2018/19 financial year.
  - 1.4. At previous meetings of the Panel it was decided that for Caerphilly CBC the following criteria would apply when considering applications for assistance from the Welsh Church Act Fund: -
    - (i) A grant of no more than £2,000 to be given to partly fund projects of £6,000 and over.
    - (ii) Smaller projects less than £6,000 be grant aided up to a third of the total cost.
    - (iii) All organisations receiving grants produce the necessary financial records to show the expenditure has been incurred.
    - (iv) No organisation is allowed to apply in consecutive years.
  - 1.5. At its meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 the Panel agreed that in future, Officers would approve grant applications meeting the Welsh Church Act Fund criteria, using delegated powers. Such decisions would then be reported to the Panel for information, where Members could ask for further information if required.
  - 1.6. The Panel has raised concerns for some time regarding the high level of balances being carried forward for the Welsh Church Act Fund. As a result, at its informal meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018 the Panel was presented with 5 options in respect of the level of grants awarded from the Welsh Church Act Fund. These options were as follows: -

**Option 1** - Applications of up to £2,500 to be fully grant funded with applications above £2,500 to be subject to a grant rate of 50% on the sum in excess of £2,500 e.g. an application requesting £4,000 that meets the criteria would receive £3,250 (£2,500 plus 50% of £1,500). Members may wish to consider a maximum grant award.

**Option 2** - Award all applications that meet the WCAF criteria at 50% with a maximum award of £10,000.

**Option 3** - Award grants of up to 90% with a maximum award of £10,000

**Option 4** - Applications of up to £5,000 to be fully grant funded with applications above
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£5,000 to be subject to a grant rate of 75% on the sum in excess £5,000 e.g. an application requesting £8,000 that meets the criteria would receive £7,250 (£5,000 plus 75% of £3,000). Members may wish to consider a maximum grant award.

**Option 5 - Keep grant awards as they currently stand.**

- 1.7 Following consideration of the options the preferred approach of the Panel was option 4 with a maximum grant payable of £10,000. The Panel also requested that the grants process be reviewed to expedite payments wherever possible and that options be explored for publicising the Fund more widely. The Panel also requested that the number of quotes/estimates to be provided with applications should be reduced to 2 for grant applications under £5,000 and 3 for applications over £5,000.
- 1.8 To ensure that there are maximum community benefits from funding awarded through the Welsh Church Fund it is recommended that grants should be restricted to community organisations and community based projects in the first instance and that this position should be reviewed in 12 months time.
- 1.9 Cabinet is asked to: -
  - 1.9.1 Consider the recommendation of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel that Option 4 be implemented with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.
  - 1.9.2 Agree that grants should be restricted to community organisations and community based projects in the first instance and that this position should be reviewed in 12 months time.
  - 1.9.3 Note that grant awards that meet the agreed criteria will continue to be approved by the Head of Corporate Finance using delegated powers.
  - 1.9.4 Note that officers will undertake a review of the application process to expedite payments wherever possible.

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Consultees: Grant to the Voluntary Sector Panel  
Corporate Management Team  
David Roberts, Principal Group Accountant  
Lisa Lane, Solicitor

Appendices:

Appendix A Report to the Informal Meeting of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel (17/01/18).

Background Papers: -

Minutes of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

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