

# **GRANTS COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

6 June 2011

The meeting commenced at 10.35 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond (In the Chair)

Councillors: Robbie Payne and Hilary Thompson

### **Also present:**

Councillor Marjorie James, Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee  
and Chris Simmons, Vice Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director, Community Services  
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager  
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **2. Declarations of interest by Members**

None.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2011**

Received.

### **4. Community Pool 2011/2012** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non key.

#### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report was to advise and seek approval for the level of grant awards to community groups and voluntary organisations from the Community Pool for 2011/2012.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Community Pool budget for the 2011/2012 financial year was set at £457,024. At a meeting of the Grants Committee on 1st March 2011 Members agreed that the balance of the Community Pool for 2010/2011 could be rolled forward into the 2011/2012 budget. As this request was approved the total balance of £516,034 was available to be committed during the 2011/2012 financial year.

At the meeting on 1st March 2011 the Grants Committee approved awards totalling £232,572.50 to voluntary/community groups in Hartlepool.

Officers were informed by Hartlepool Community Studio that as the group had gone into liquidation they would not be claiming their award for the 2011/2012 financial year. As the award to the Studio was available to be re-committed the balance available for distribution at this meeting is £293,024.

An application for funding from Red Dreams was rejected by the Grants Committee on 1st March 2011. Since then Red Dreams appealed against that decision. After careful consideration of the appeal, officers feel that on reflection it would be appropriate to make a positive recommendation regarding the application from Red Dreams. Officers therefore recommend that an award of £2,896 be approved as a contribution towards the core costs of Red Dreams for the period April to September 2011.

### **Decision**

- (i) The application in relation to Red Dreams for a contribution towards the organisations core costs of £2,896 was approved.
- (ii) The remaining balance of the Community Pool to be considered for allocation against bids at future meetings within the 2011/12 financial year.

## **5. Adjournment of Meeting**

A brief adjournment took place to enable clarification to be sought on questions raised by Members.

## **6. Community Pool Grant Funding – Hartlepool Credit Union Ltd** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

## **Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report was to update Members of the Grants Committee regarding the work that had been done by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in relation to the application for funding from the Community Pool from Hartlepool Credit Union Ltd for the 2011/2012 financial year.

## **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

At a meeting of the Grants Committee on 1 March 2011 Members approved an award of £16,793 for Hartlepool Credit Union Ltd as a contribution towards the core costs of the group including the salary costs of a Membership Supervisor, a Membership Officer, a Collector and a contribution to rent and running costs.

Following the decision taken by the Grants Committee, a Call-In Notice was submitted by five Members of the Council. As the Call-In Notice met all the constitutional requirements, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, at its meeting on 25 March 2011 gave consideration to the signatories view/opinion that the decision had been taken in contravention of the principles of decision making (as outlined in Article 13 of the Constitution). The reasons identified in the Call-In Notice being clarity of aims and desired outcomes and reasonableness.

Having considered the content of the Call-In Notice, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee supported the need to look in more detail at how the decision had been made and accepted the Call-In.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee appointed a Working Group to investigate the Call-In. The Working Group along with the Assistant Director of Community Services and the Community and Youth Resource Manager met on 7 April to gather together information to help them to carry out the investigation. The outcome of the Working Group was reported to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 7 April 2011. The Working Group recommended that the decision to award Hartlepool Credit Union Ltd a grant, should be referred back to the Grants Committee for consideration and to decide if the Committee wishes to amend or reaffirm its decision in relation to this application.

The Grants Committee met on 20 April with the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee invited to the meeting. The Grants Committee decided to invite representatives from the Credit Union to an informal meeting of the Grants Committee to discuss their application and to help the Committee to gain an understanding of some of the issues raised by the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

The informal meeting of the Grants Committee was held on 5 May 2011.

Representatives of the Credit Union attended. Details in relation to the application to the Community Pool were discussed with the Grants Committee agreeing that meeting the group had been worthwhile and the information gathered from the meeting would help them to decide if they want to amend or reaffirm their decision to award funding to the Credit Union for the 2011/2012 financial year.

Clarification was sought on the progress in relation to the nomination of Council representatives to the Hartlepool Credit Union Board. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Procurement reaffirmed the decision to provide funding for the Hartlepool Credit Union subject to the appointment of the Council representatives to the Credit Union Board.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the decision to provide funding to the Hartlepool Credit Union Board of £16,793 be reaffirmed subject to the appointment of the Council representatives nominated to the Board at Annual Council.
- (ii) That the allocation of grant aid be released in monthly instalments to safeguard the Council's investment and minimise risk.

The meeting concluded at 10.54 am

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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