

GRANTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

22 December 2011

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (In the Chair)

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillors: Jonathan Brash and Cath Hill

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director, Community Services
Susan Rybak, Community and Youth Resource Manager
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

23. Apologies for Absence

None.

24. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor Jonathan Brash declared a prejudicial interest in minute 26 and left the meeting prior to its consideration.

25. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2011

Received.

26. Hartlepool Families First – One 77 (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To seek consideration for funding for Hartlepool Families First's One 77 project, formerly known as Café 177 for the 2011/2012 financial year.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Community Pool budget for the 2011/2012 financial year had been set at £457,024. However, the roll forward of the balance of the 2010/2011 Community Pool budget was approved by Grants Committee on 1 March 2011 making the total available to commit during the 2011/2012 financial year £516,034.

In rounds 1, 2, 3 and 4 awards had been approved totalling £452,612, the remaining balance available for commitment was £65,726.

Hartlepool Families First applied to the Community Pool for a one off grant of £19,481 for their One 77 project. The funding would contribute to the core costs of the project including the salary costs of a Training Manager, a Sous /Tutor Chef, a Caretaker/Cleaner, an Apprentice and utility costs.

The application was made by Hartlepool Families First as a result of the group who shared the building having moved out in September 2011. The group, Avanta, were subject to a month's notice period as the lease was only for 12 months originally. The payment for the notice period was paid up front however, Avanta moving out of the building left the One 77 project with a shortfall in its rental income which has had a knock on effect on the project's core budget for the remainder of the financial year.

Officers suggested that if this bid was not for crisis funding then support would not be recommended for such a diverse range of cost areas, as it was the norm to only support a maximum of two key workers within an organisation. Normally support with utility costs etc was only provided when salary costs were not borne, ie if a group was managed and ran by volunteers.

If the award to Hartlepool Families First for One 77 was approved, the balance of the Community Pool would be £46,245 which was available should any other groups find themselves in a financial crisis before the end of the financial year. Any balance would normally be rolled over into the next financial year.

A Member sought clarification of the sustainability of One 77 and whether a replacement tenant was being sought. The Community and Youth Resource Manager confirmed that the vacated space within the building was being marketed with a view to securing another tenancy agreement. In addition to this, Hartlepool Families First had indicated that any rental income received during the remaining 4 months of the current financial year would be utilised to contribute to the identified shortfall. As a result of this, it was suggested that the award be released in monthly instalments, in the event that once a tenant was secured, the remainder of the award may be reduced or may not be required.

It was suggested that any future lease arrangements should be aligned with the financial year to avoid the potential for similar problems occurring in the

future.

Members were very supportive of the One 77 Project as it provided a valuable service to people who were mainly disadvantaged with low level education achievement but who were looking to improve their skills and it was noted that the income received from the bistro funded the heating and lighting of the building.

In response to a query from a Member, it was confirmed that when bids were received as part of the annual submissions, they were measured against a set criteria. However, when applications for grant funding were received during the year, especially for emergency funding support, they should be looked at individually and on their own merits taking into account the organisation's demonstration of sustainability into the new financial year.

It was suggested by a Member that the Council's procurement section contact Hartlepool Families First to ascertain if there was any opportunities for partnership arrangements with the Council in relation to the procurement of services, food produce and utilities.

The Chair wished to thank the officers involved in the preparation of reports and support to the Grants Committee for their hard work and commitment during the year.

Decision

- (i) That the request from Hartlepool Families First for the One 77 project for grant aid of £19,481 as a contribution towards the core costs of the project including salary and utility costs, was approved.
- (ii) That the grant award be released on a monthly basis to safeguard the Council's investment and minimise risk.
- (iii) That the Council's Procurement Section contact Hartlepool Families First to explore opportunities for partnership arrangements in relation to the procurement of services, food produce and utilities.

The meeting concluded at 10.17 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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