

## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

### **Report of Theresa Hewett, Executive Member – Communities** **(Author – Rob Walker, Director of Community Services)**

**Cabinet – 15 September 2009**

**Full Council – 1 October 2009**

### **Allocation of Breckland Council's Area Based Grant for 2008-2011**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for the allocation of Breckland Council's Area Based Grant for 2008-11, which will enable the Authority to undertake a programme of work on National Indicator 1 (percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area).
- 1.2 The Council has also been successful in attracting Migration Impact Funding (2009-2011), which requires Cabinet approval.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- 2.1 Accept the Migrants Impact Funding grant from the awarding body
- It is recommended that Full Council:
- 2.2 Approves Area Based Grant funding for the Community Liaison Officer post and the Participatory Budgeting scheme
  - 2.3 Delegates authority to Cabinet to approve Area Based Grant funding for Wayland Community Radio and META.

**Note:** In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

#### **3. Information, Issues and Options**

##### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 Area Based Grant (ABG) is a general grant allocated directly to local authorities as additional revenue funding to areas. It is allocated according to specific policy criteria (e.g. community cohesion) rather than general formulae. Local authorities are free to use all of this non-ringfenced funding as they see fit to support the delivery of local, regional and national priorities in their areas.
- 3.1.2 Breckland's allocation for the period 2008-11 totals £624,338 and is largely (but not exclusively) based upon the 'community cohesion' best value performance indicator findings as per the 2006/07 General Best Value User Survey. In 2006/2007, the district had the 13<sup>th</sup> lowest score nationally for the percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (National Indicator 1).
- 3.1.3 The table below highlights that £540,000 has been granted to Breckland as a result of the best value performance indicator findings. The remaining £84,338 has been granted to reflect the new burdens on local planning authorities arising from the expectations in the Planning Policy Statement on Climate Change and additional planning policy issues.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
<b>Area Based Grant</b>				
Community Cohesion	95,294.00	174,706.00	270,000.00	540,000.00
Climate Change	22,500.00	22,500.00	22,500.00	67,500.00
New Burdens (habitats)	0.00	16,838.00	0.00	16,838.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>117,794.00</b>	<b>214,044.00</b>	<b>292,500.00</b>	<b>624,338.00</b>

3.1.4 The focus of this report is the £540,000 allocated for 'community cohesion'. A separate report on the *Area Based Grant for Planning and Climate Change* has already been brought to Cabinet for consideration in June 2009.

3.1.4 Although there are no restrictions on allocation of ABG, there is an expectation [by CLG and the Audit Commission] that it will be used to support the delivery of local, regional and national priorities in a relevant policy area.

3.1.5 As a non-ringfenced general grant, there will be no restrictions on the Authority's ability to carry forward ABG. However, the Audit Commission will have a role in assessing whether authorities have invested their resources effectively.

3.1.6 Of the £540,000 granted to Breckland: £200,000 has already been committed to the Pride in Breckland project (over three years) and £49,215.69 was spent on BRECKFEST 2008. The remaining funds of £290,784.31 are uncommitted.

3.1.7 Breckland recently participated in the first national pilot for Specialist Cohesion Teams. A joint CLG and Breckland Council report was produced following the pilot and sets out a series of improvement recommendations for service delivery focussed on cohesion and migration in Breckland. The pilot [and subsequent report] highlighted the importance of cohesion across all local communities and that any approach to tackle cohesion issues should include every aspect of the Authority's service.

3.1.8 The Council has also been successful in attracting Migrants Impact Funding that requires Cabinet approval. This project includes the following proposals that will be of benefit to all sections of the community :-

- Citizen's Shop and Mobile Bus - providing high quality access to services in Thetford through a "citizens shop" and in rural communities through mobile provision.
- Training and Skills for staff and communities around improving access to services for all sections of the community
- Communication – work on myths and legends around migrant communities

3.1.9 Economic migrants and students coming to the UK from outside the EU are now charged a levy in addition to their normal visa application fee. The revenue from this levy forms the Migrants Impact Fund. The Fund means that migrants are being asked to pay an additional contribution to that which they already make through taxes, to support the communities in which they live.

## **3.2 Issues**

3.2.1 A portfolio of four projects is put forward for Member appraisal. Each project is detailed individually below and all will address Breckland's score for National Indicator 1. Collectively, the projects will also deliver a number of key recommendations from the Specialist Cohesion Pilot report. They will be delivered by a range of Council departments and partners agencies and will address 'community cohesion' in a range of different settings.

### 3.2.2 Portfolio of Projects

#### **Community Liaison Officer**

Funding for the Community Liaison Officer post ends on 31 March 2010. This post is currently based with the Housing Team and provides an important – best practice – resource for our local migrant communities, ensuring that they are well placed to access good quality services from the Council and partners.

It is recommended that funding for this post is provided from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2012 (two years fixed term) using the ABG.

#### **META**

The META project, run by the Keystone Development Trust provides an advice, information and advocacy service for migrant workers [and communities] in Thetford and across the district. This project has attracted funds through the NHS Norfolk led Thetford: Healthy Town project and ABG funding would help ensure the project's ongoing success.

The META project was highlighted for its best practice in the recent Specialist Cohesion Team report and is well regarded regionally.

It is recommended that funding for this project is provided from the ABG and an SLA is drawn up between Breckland Council and the Keystone Development Trust.

#### **Wayland Community Radio**

Ofcom recently awarded Wayland Community Radio a five year full-time license to broadcast to the Wayland region of Breckland. They will go on-air on Friday 28th August 2009 broadcasting on 107.3fm.

With new equipment in place, Wayland Community Radio will broadcast to a larger part of the Breckland local authority area than previously possible. The audience figures for a community radio station are impressive and the audience 'demographic' is largely the over 65s. Foreign language shows are broadcast on a regular basis.

It is recommended that funding for this project is provided from the ABG and an SLA is drawn up between Breckland Council and Wayland Community Radio. As part of the SLA, the Council would secure regular 'feature' and advertisement slots on broadcasts and widen the forms of communication it utilises for reaching and targeting residents.

#### **Participatory Budgeting**

The Breckland LSP was successful in securing £25,000 from "Your Norfolk: Your Decision" to run a participatory budgeting pilot in Breckland during the remainder of the financial year 2009/10. £10,000 has been allocated to the Breckland Youth Council to spend on projects identified by young people in the district aged 11-19. £15,000 has been allocated to be spent on an area basis with each of Breckland's market towns [and associated hinterlands] receiving a participatory budget of £3000.

It is recommended that £10,000 funding for this project is provided from the ABG to make a total of £5000 available in each of Breckland's market towns and associated hinterlands.

3.2.4 It is proposed that Area Based Grant (2008-11) funding is allocated as detailed in the table below to deliver the above projects.

**Proposals for Allocation of ABG**

	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>Total</b>
META	8,000.00	24,000.00	0.00	32,000.00
Wayland Community Radio	6,000.00	18,000.00	0.00	24,000.00
Participatory Budgeting	10000.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Community Liaison Officer	0.00	40,000.00	40,000.00	80,000.00

**Total**

**146,000.00**

3.2.5 If funding is allocated as detailed above, this would leave £144,784.31 of the Area Based Grant (2008-2011) uncommitted.

3.2.6 As detailed above, it is recommended that Cabinet accepts the Migrant Impact Funding from the grant awarding body. It is further recommended that Full Council approves funding for the Community Liaison Officer post and the Participatory Budgeting scheme and delegates authority to Cabinet with regard to funding for Wayland Community Radio and META.

**3.3 Options**

3.3.1 To approve proposals for the allocation of Breckland Council's Area Based Grant and to accept the Migration Impact Funding grant from the awarding body.

3.3.2 To not approve proposals for the allocation of Breckland Council's Area Based Grant to not accept the Migration Impact Funding grant from the awarding body.

**3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

3.4.1 As highlighted above, Breckland's ABG allocation and is largely based upon the 'community cohesion' best value performance indicator findings as per the 2006/07 General Best Value User Survey. The proposal recommended to Members for approval will build on existing good practice in Breckland and enhance cohesion across all communities.

3.4.2 Breckland was successful in attracting £250,000 Migration Impact Funding, the largest grant awarded to a local authority in Norfolk. These externally sourced funds will add value to existing good practice and activities deliver in Breckland by the Authority itself and a range of partners.

3.4.2 There is a strong economic case for building 'community cohesion' . Research (*Guidance for local authorities on how to mainstream community cohesion into other services 2009*) has shown that more cohesive areas have lower crime levels, reduced fear of crime, improved [mental] health and improved participation in education/employment.

**4. Risk and Financial Implications**

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 None

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 Detailed above and in attached Proforma B

**5. Legal Implications**

5.1 None

**6. Other Implications**

- a) Equalities: None
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: None
- f) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004] None

**7. Alignment to Council Priorities**

- 7.1 The contents of this report contribute to the following Council priorities:
- a) Building Safer and Stronger Communities

**8. Ward/Community Affected**

8.1 All wards affected.

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

*This is not a key decision*