

INFORMATION UPDATE

This update is part of a regular series, and has been produced to update you on some of the issues affecting Worcestershire County Council's funding arrangements with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), known as 'Shopping Investing and Giving'.

Anyone needing further information can use the contact details at the end of this update to get in touch – our team of officers is here to help and support you. To see past editions of these updates, or to find out more about the Council's work with the VCS, visit the County Council's VCS Unit's webpage at:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/voluntary

Please share the information in this update with other members of your organisation.

An update on 'Shopping Investing and Giving'

Shopping how the Council contracts with external providers (including the VCS) to deliver public services on our behalf, using the procurement code

Investing the Council's future grant arrangements to support the provision of infrastructure services to 'front line' VCS organisations

Giving the Council's future arrangements for giving grants via an open applications process to VCS organisations to support their role as independent organizations

In the November 2007 edition of the VCS Information Update, we gave you an update on the financial situation the Council faces during 2008, and the impact this may have on the VCS.

You will be aware that no final decisions will be made about the Council's financial arrangements until 21st February 2008, when the annual budget setting meeting is held.

SHOPPING

You will be aware that from feedback from the VCS about the opportunities and challenges organisations face in competitively tendering for Council contracts, the County Council and the Worcestershire VCS Infrastructure Consortium devised an intensive programme of awareness raising and training, which is being delivered free of charge to VCS organisations from September 07 – March 08. Funding for this programme has largely been provided by the County Council, with contributions from the Consortium's Capacity Builders funding. The training and support programme covers elements such as:

Commissioning, procurement and contracting

- Competitive tendering
- Gershon efficiencies and County Council budgetary pressures
- The need for increased partnership working between the public and voluntary sectors to deliver public services
- The need for greater collaboration within the VCS
- Business planning, quality and diversifying income streams
- Managing change
- Organisational health checks

The programme is being delivered through a variety of methods, including formal training, workshops, mini conferences, district-based network groups etc. and it has been widely advertised through VCS networks locally.

The County Council and the Consortium are keen to ensure that the programme has been successful in building VCS confidence about how to tender for future contracts, and has helped to increase understanding about the legal environment that we must operate within.

INVESTING

The Council is committed to supporting the VCS in Worcestershire to be strong, sustainable and independent. We believe that an efficient way of achieving this is by investing in a central infrastructure support service run by the VCS for the VCS.

In the November edition, we told you that in September 07 the Council had advertised a 3-year grant as a contribution towards the delivery of infrastructure services for VCS organisations in Worcestershire.

Two applications were received, and after detailed evaluation, the Council decided to award the grant to the Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium (WIC), subject to the mutual agreement of a work programme.

We anticipate that the grant arrangements will come into operation on 1st April 2008.

The WIC described in their application how they propose to deliver 3 specific types of support to the wider VCS using this grant:

- Business support services
- The establishment of a single system of VCS representation and voice
- A strategic brokerage and marketing service for volunteering

The WIC also receive other funding streams from national and local sources, which will be combined with the County Council's grant to provide a holistic infrastructure service for the VCS.

For more information about the WIC visit their website www.winc.org.uk .

To find out how the WIC will use this grant to benefit you as VCS organisations, please email the Chair of WIC, Elspeth Rolls elspethr@comfirst.org.uk.

GIVING

As we described in the November edition, Councillors are committed to maintaining a grants programme to support VCS organisations, despite the challenging budgetary situation the Council faces over the coming years. Whilst grants will be available, there will be a limited pot, and we will be unlikely to be able to give a grant to every VCS organisation applying.

From 3rd March, we will be sending out promotional leaflets about the Council's new grants programme.

The application packs will be available from 10th March 2008 for you to download from our website www.worcestershire.gov.uk/voluntary or we can post them to you.

All future commitments about the budget available for grants will be subject to final decisions being made at the Council budget setting meeting on 21st February, but we anticipate that these will be the grants available:

Strategic (3 Year) Grants

- a. Supporting people to access independent advice services
- b. Supporting children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles, feel safe, learn and achieve and feel part of their community
- c. Supporting people to have better access to services (community transport)
- d. Supporting community based activities and day services for older people

1 Year/1Off Grants

1. Celebrating cultural diversity
2. Supporting people with mental health issues
3. Support for community based arts organisations
4. Supporting people to reuse and recycle
5. Supporting community based activities and day services for older people

Grants to support community based activities and day services for older people will be launched in October 08, and come into operation on 1st April 09. All existing grants which currently support these services will be extended until 31st March 09.

Learning disability grant funding is channelled through the Learning Disabilities Fund, which is allocated by the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board, so this area is not included in this grants programme, although the fund will be administered in line with the principles of Council's new system.

There will also be a small grants scheme linked to each County Councillor which will support positive activities for young people – this will be launched in the spring.

Timetable

21st February - Council budget setting and Directorates receive final confirmation of grant budgets available

10th March - Launch of applications process with forms and guidelines on Council website and paper copies available

Mid April - events for potential applicants (see below for details)

4pm 30th April - Closing date for receipt of applications

May/June - Assessment and evaluation of applications

End June – Announcement of grants awarded

July – September - Grant agreements negotiated

30th September - Most existing mainstream budget grants cease

October – New grant agreements into operation

October – Launch of applications process for strategic and community grants to support community based activities and day services for older people

Support and Events for Potential Applicants

During April members of the WIC will be offering advice sessions in local areas for organisations wanting detailed support to complete application forms, so please contact your local office to book an appointment (see contacts list below for details).

In addition, the following events have been organised by the WIC for VCS organisations who may be interested in applying for one or more of the Council's grants:

Date	Time	Venue	Session
07.04.08	11am – 1pm	Bradbury Centre, Worcester	Strategic Grants
07.04.08	2pm – 4pm	Bradbury Centre, Worcester	Community Grants
09.04.08	10am – 12	Methodist Church Hall, Bromsgrove	Community Grants
10.04.08	10am – 12	Civic Centre, Pershore	Community Grants

To book your place or to find out more about the local advice sessions please contact **Kate Walton, telephone 01386 554299 or email admin@pershorevolunteers.org**

Subject to agreement at the Council's budget setting meeting, wherever possible, all existing grants from the Council's mainstream budgets will be maintained from 1st April until 30th September 08, but there will be no inflationary increases given on these grants.

It is also likely that that all future 3 year strategic grants awarded from the Council's mainstream budgets from 1st October 08 onwards will not have inflationary increases given year on year throughout their 'life'.

WORCESTERSHIRE'S FUNDING AND GRANT FINDER SERVICE

Do you need advice about funding for a partnership project? The Worcestershire Partnership Funding Desk is a dedicated resource committed to providing organisations in the county with relevant, accurate and useful information on UK and EW external funding streams. You can search over 7,700 grants for free by visiting www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk and clicking on the funding logo.

GOODBYE

Jenny Murray, the Council's VCS Unit Co-Ordinator is leaving on 7th March after two and a half years in her role – the post will be filled as soon as possible, so look out for new contact details in the next edition of this bulletin.

USEFUL CONTACTS

County Council: Adult & Community Services Directorate

Mental Health Services contracts/grants Yvonne Bentley
ybentley@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 766781

Learning Disability Services contracts/grants Martine Bishop
Mbishop2@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 728868

Older People's Services contracts/grants Sarah Masterson
Smasterson@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 728809

Supporting People Emma Matthews
ematthews@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 728830

WiNN Lisa Porter
lporter@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 728804

Physical Disability Services contracts/grants Judith Turvey
jturvey@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 728801

Cultural Services
(Heritage Partnership) Debbie Birch
dbirch@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 766239
(Libraries & Learning) Kathy Kirk
kkirk@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 766264

Equality and diversity Rukhsana Koser
rkoser@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 766938

Substance misuse Sue Davidson
sdavidson@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 766735

All other queries Gordon Stewart
gstewart@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 728806

County Council: Children's Services Directorate

Head of Community Partnership Geoff Taylor-Smith
gtaylor-smith@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 768691

Service Development Manager – Community Capacity and Partnerships (grants)
Pete Sugg psugg@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 765793

Service Development Manager - Commissioning and Contracting
Åsa Johnsson Humphries ajohnssonhumphries@worcestershires.gov.uk
01905 728848

Contracts Manager
Mark Cage mcage@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 728901

Contracts Officers
Sue Boyd sboyd@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 728814
Ezekiel Obileye eobileye@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 728924

County Council: Environmental Services Directorate

Team Manager
Darius Mason dmason@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 768434

Development Officer – Community Transport
Michele Jones mcjones@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 766306

Reuse and recycling
Chris Atkinson cnatkinson@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 768227

County Council: Planning, Economy & Performance Directorate

General queries and signposting – VCS Unit
Jenny Murray jmurray@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 728650

or
Julie Bishop jbishop2@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 766885

Regeneration
Margaret Gray mgray@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 766373

Social enterprise
Joe Pooler jpooler@worcestershires.gov.uk 01905 766896

County Council: Corporate Services Directorate

Procurement

Michael Howard mhoward@worcestershire.gov.uk 01905 766507

Worcestershire VCS Infrastructure Consortium Members

Visit www.winc.org.uk to find out about the consortium's role.

Age Concern H&W

Kat Hayward chayward@achw.org.uk 01905 726652

Bromsgrove & Redditch Network

Ann Sowton ann@barn.org.uk 01527 60282

Community Action Malvern & District

Diane Bellamy diane@communityaction.org.uk 01684 580638

Community Action Wyre Forest

Ellen Green elleng@wyreforest.org.uk 01562 513399

Community First

Elsbeth Rolls elsbeth@comfirst.org.uk 01684 573334

Droitwich CVS

Carol Pratt admin@droitwichcvs.org.uk 01905779115

Evesham Volunteer Centre

Helen Gray helen.gray@btopenworld.com 01386 40165

Pershore Volunteer Centre

Kate Walton admin@pershorevolunteers.org 01386 554299

WAVOCC

James Smith wavocc@btconnect.com 01684 575545

Council for Voluntary Youth Service

Mike Hunter office@wcvys.co.uk 01562 748450

Worcs Racial Equality Council

Peter Oteng wrec@hotmail.co.uk 01905 29283

Worcester Volunteer Centre

Sally Ellison sally.wcvb@btconnect.com 01905 24741