

Report to: Adult Services Panel
Cabinet

Date: 17 March 2009
19 March 2009

Subject: Annual Report of Access Grants 2008/09

Report of: Executive Director of Environmental Services

Contact officer: Nick Metcalfe - 404375

Purpose / summary: To provide an annual report on access grants approved in the financial year 2008/09.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: Only alternative is not to report on performance. This would be contrary to the co-ordinated approach to grant aid and the delegated decision making approved by Cabinet.

Recommendation / decision: Members are recommended to:

1. Note the Access Grants approved in 2008/09;
2. Approve the carry over of unallocated resources in the current financial year to supplement the budget available for new access grant schemes in 2009/10 and
3. Refer this report to Wigan Access Committee for information.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision. The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 31 March 2009.

Risks / Implications:

Financial: Contained within existing budget approval for 2008/09.
Staffing: Within existing resources
Policy: None
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted? No. Disability considerations and issues are explored through a survey of those organisations submitting grant applications
Wards affected: All

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

No

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

No

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes***

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes***

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No ***

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	X
Sharing for corporate understanding	

Discussion	
Decision	X
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
Adult Services 17 March 2009		19 March 2009	

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 3 March 2009

1. Background:

- 1.1 Access Grants for the financial year 2008/09 have been approved under a system of delegations to Chief Officers in association with the appropriate Cabinet Member (Healthier Communities and Older People's Champion). Decisions were taken over seven rounds (May 2008, June 2008, August 2008, September 2008, October 2008, November 2008 and January 2009) in consultation with Wigan Access Committee and the Joint Grant Aid Panel. I am therefore providing details of the grants approved for this period.

2. Grants Approved

- 2.1 At the time of writing a total fund of £32,571 has been committed in principle to support 15 Access Grant schemes in 2008/09. The total value of work undertaken will be in excess of £92,277 and Access Grants will contribute approximately 30% of overall project costs.
- 2.2 A list of approved schemes may be found in Appendix One.

3. Corporate Grant Aid Policy

- 3.1 During 2008/09, Access Grants have continued to operate in line with the Council's corporate grant aid policy. Applications were made on the standardised application form with information relating to each individual grant scheme held on the corporate grant database.

4. Observations

- 4.1 Grants generally fall into one of 4 categories: induction loops, ramps, disabled persons' toilets and other specialist schemes.
- 4.2 Of the 40 or more enquiries received annually, about 14 -17 are approved as Access Grants within the budget available. The rest either become commitments in the following year or remain as schemes pending. Lead in times for Access Grants tend to be long because of the need for groups to raise additional funds, the need to supply accurate drawings and obtain statutory consents, the difficulty in obtaining builders estimates or the sheer complexity of the access problem(s) to be overcome.
- 4.3 A survey has been carried out of all applicants who received a decision in 2008/09. 100% of applicants were fairly or very satisfied with the service they received.

Priorities for Funding

- 4.4 Access Grants cover between 50% and 75% of eligible costs based on the 4 priority groups set out in the table below.

Priority	Category of building or site	Grant Level	Funds allocated in 2008/09
1	Community/voluntary premises	75%	100%
2	Local authority premises	75%	0%
3	Other statutory authority premises	50%	0%
4	Local independent commercial concerns	50%	0%

Briefly, the criteria for Access Grants are set according to ownership of buildings provided that the grant will facilitate wider public and community use, in relation to the level of grant available and the contribution required from the applicants.

- 4.5 In 2008/09 there was an increase in the amount of grant available from a maximum of £2,000 to £2,300 (plus £200 allowance for fees). The overall budget was supplemented by the approved carry over of £14,144 from 2007/08 giving a larger budget of £39,622 for new Access Grants schemes in 2008/09. In the 2008/09 financial year the average grant was approximately £2,171 compared to £1,530 in 2007/08.

5. Proposals for 2009/10

- 5.1 In the 2009/10 financial year, the provisional budget for Access Grants is £25,988, representing an increase by the annual rate of inflation.
- 5.2 At the time of writing there is £7,051 of the current budget which remains unallocated and it is proposed that any under-spend in 2008/09 is carried over into the new financial year giving a total budget of £33,039 for Access Grants in 2009/10.

6. Alternative options considered and reason for the recommended option:

- 6.1 No changes to the current eligibility criteria for the distribution of Access Grants in the 2009/10 financial year.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are recommended to:
1. Note the Access Grants approved in 2008/09.
 2. Approve the carry over of any under-spend to allow more schemes to be approved in the 2009/10 financial year
 3. Refer this report to Wigan Access Committee for information.

Appendix One

Wigan Council Environmental Services Department - Planning and Regeneration Department Summary of Access Grants 2008/2009			
Organisation	Scheme	Grant (£)	Ward
St Peters Pavilion, St Peters Recreation Ground, Wigan Road, Hindley, WN2 3DF	To provide induction loops for the social room and committee room	£2,300	Hindley
Cedar Hall, Morris Street, Wigan, WN1 3RB	Application for two grants i) Provision of ramp and widening door at the main entrance of the church. ii) Provision of disabled person's toilet	£2,500 (inc £200 Claimed for design fees) & £2,300	Wigan Central
Hindley Community Association Tudor House 8 Liverpool Road, Hindley, Wigan WN2 3HU	Bringing the disabled persons toilet up to standard and improving access.	£2,500 (inc £200 Claimed for design fees)	Hindley
Higher Folds Community Centre Stirling Close, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 2UB	Provision of automatic sliding door to facilitate disabled access and egress, and to provide an electronic wheelchair accessible intercom system.	£2,300	Leigh East
St Johns Church, Mosley Common Road, Mosley Common, Manchester, M28 1AN	Application for two grants i) Provision of ramp at entrance to the Church. ii) Provision of disabled person's toilet.	£2,500 (inc £200 Claimed for design fees) & £2,300	Astley Mosley Common
St Francis Church Hall, City Road, Kitt Green Wigan, WN5 0HP	Application for Two Grants i) Provision of ramp at entrance to the Church hall. ii) Provision of disabled person's toilet.	£2175 & £2,250	Pemberton

St Matthews Bowling Club, Billinge Road, Wigan, WN3 6BJ	Provision of a unisex disabled persons toilet within its own external building.	£2,300	Winstanley
Avril Court, Henry Street, Spring View, WN3 4TW	Installation of sound and induction loop system in the communal lounge.	£691	Abram
Wigan Parish Church Bishopgate Wigan WN1 1JR	Application for Two Grants (i) Provision of a unisex disabled persons' toilet. (ii) external metal ramp	£2,500 (inc £200 Claimed for design fees) & £2,300	Wigan Central
Wigan Baptist Church, Scarisbrick Street, Swinley, Wigan, WN1 2BS	Provision of a unisex disabled persons' toilet within a new area of toilets.	£2,500 (inc £200 Claimed for design fees)	Wigan Central
Trinity Methodist Church, 14 Fleet Street, Pemberton, Wigan, WN5 0DS.	Installation of induction loop in Church Hall and two additional meeting rooms.	£1,155	Pemberton

Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section: Development Division – Environmental Services Department

Policy/Service Area: Policy and Projects

Person Completing Form: Nick Metcalfe

Date: 03/03/09

Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race		X	Disability		X
Ethnicity		X	Gender		X
Age		X	Religion		X
Class		X	Sexual Orientation		X

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?

Some groups or organisations are likely to find accessing grant aid more difficult than others for practical and social reasons. The process, even with the support of infrastructure organisations, may be inaccessible for those whose first language is not English. Groups in deprived areas may find the process, even with support, intimidating and may find it more difficult to identify projects eligible for financial support.

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?

The annual Customer Satisfaction Survey and Equality & Diversity Monitoring Form are used to improve the quality of our service and reduce/remove any negative impacts.
The grant aid database holds all the data collected through the application process and is capable of analysis and interrogation.
Wigan Access Committee is consulted on all applications for grant aid.

Action Plan – *What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?*

A more systematic analysis is needed of the impact of current grant aid processes. Review scheme criteria and application process to meet local need.
Examine inclusiveness and accessibility of funding schemes.
Review how this data is disseminated and used by partners.
Establish the learning points of current practice looking at alternative methods for promotion and development.

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?

Yes

Timescale	A small group of managers have been meeting in 2008/09 to look at an equality impact assessment of the Council's grant aid services. Part of ongoing review of Corporate Grant Aid processes in 2009/10.
Responsibility	Business Transformation – Policy (Equality, Diversity and Cohesion; Partnership/Voluntary Sector) and a small group of scheme managers.
Comments	Diversity of approach is vital. It ensures that the principle of support is shared broadly and that the benefits have an impact in all areas of activity across our partnership framework.

Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?

Departmental Service Plan	Development Division – Environmental Services Department
Section/Team Plan	Policy and Projects Section
Other (Specify)	

Date for further review: Ongoing