

COUNCIL MEETING – 8 MARCH 2022

PROPOSALS FOR A COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 As part of the ongoing review of the Council's governance arrangements, to seek approval for the establishment of a new community grant scheme to replace and consolidate both the current Covid Resilience Grant Scheme and Community & Arts grant scheme.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The District Council has delivered a number of community grant schemes over recent years to successfully support community and voluntary partners in their objectives. It is now proposed that two of these Council funded schemes are consolidated into a new 'Community Grant Scheme' that will support applicant bodies to achieve their objectives, in alignment with the Council's Community Plan objectives.
- 2.2 The consolidation of the two schemes will demonstrate the Council's commitment to supporting and strengthening community organisations through increased access to funding and improved scheme flexibility for applicants. The Council will allocate £100,000 for 2022/23.
- 2.3 As part of the Council's review of its governance arrangements, the Governance Review Working Group has considered how the Council could better support all Members in their roles as community leaders. A list of proposals was presented to Full Council on 14 December, including a proposal to create an annual Member fund with spending linked to community plan priorities. The Working Group reached the conclusion that the preferred option would be to combine existing schemes and make provision for proactive Member involvement in the delivery of a new consolidated scheme. The new scheme requires applicants to demonstrate the support/endorsement of the local District Ward Councillor(s). Under the new governance arrangements, the Council's Cabinet will assess applications based on the criteria set out in guidance. The Councillors' Commission considered the scheme at their meeting held on 23 February 2022 and recommended to Full Council for approval.
- 2.4 The draft guidance and application form created for the new grant scheme are attached to this report as **Appendices A and B**.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 To approve and adopt the Community Grant Scheme as proposed.

4.0 Equalities Implications

- 4.1 There are no negative equality implications associated with this report. The Community Grant Scheme would be open to all sections of the community and the application assessment process would take into consideration fair and equitable distribution of grants across the district. In order to support this the Community Relations Team will actively work with Local Members, groups and organisations in localities to encourage applications to the scheme.

5.0 Financial Implications (FIN21-22/702)

- 5.1 The Council currently has an allocation of £12,000 within its annual revenue budget in respect of Community and Arts grants. For 2022/23 it is proposed to allocate this budget together with a contribution of £88,000 from the Community Engagement Reserve and consolidate these to generate a £100,000 grant fund.
- 5.2 The existing annual allocation of £12,000 has been forecast to remain within the Medium Term Financial Plan over the three years post 2022/23.
- 5.3 Where the £100,000 is not fully utilised within 2022/23 any balance remaining will be carried forward at that point in time in order to supplement the annual budget as described at paragraph 5.2.

6.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

- 6.1 The Community Grant Scheme aims to support projects and initiatives that contribute towards the Council's current Community Plan objectives.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) **the Council approve the Community Grant Scheme; and**
- (b) **£88,000 is allocated from the Community Engagement Reserve to the General Fund Revenue budget for 2022/23 in order to supplement the £12,000 already approved within the 2022/23 budget.**

Background Papers

Nil

For further information, please contact Andy Hardy on Ext. 5708

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