

Item

## COMMUNITY GRANTS 2019-20



**To:**

Councillor Anna Smith, Executive Councillor for Communities  
Environment & Community Scrutiny Committee 17/01/2019

**Report by:**

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**Wards affected:**

All

### Key Decision

#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This is the annual report for the Community Grants fund for voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. It provides a brief overview of the process, eligibility criteria and budget in Section 3 and Appendix 1 details the applications received with recommendations for 2019-20 awards.
- 1.2 Information on the budget and process for Area Committee Community Grants is detailed in Section 4.
- 1.3 In 2018 the Executive Councillor for Communities approved a review of grants to VCS organisations across the Council to achieve greater transparency, consistency and accountability and to explore the potential for the development of a single grants gateway for major grants. Section 5 provides an update on this work.
- 1.4 Section 6 provides an update on the transitional arrangements for funding neighbourhood community projects and partnerships.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Community Grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2019-20, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, subject to the budget approval in February 2019 and any further satisfactory information required of applicant organisations.
- 2.2 Allow Safer Communities to retain £10,000 (previously allocated to area committee grants) to enable the Council to respond to community priorities as they arise.

## **3. Community Grants**

- 3.1. The Community Grants fund was established in 2015-16 following a review of Community and Arts and Recreation Development Grants with a budget of £900,000 which remains unaltered for 2019-20, subject to approval of the Council's budget in February 2019. The budget is split into £840,000 for the main round and £60,000 for Area Committee Community Grants. An additional £100,000 has been allocated to the main round for 2019-20, as detailed in paragraph 3.2 below, making £940,000 available for the main grants.
- 3.2 In June 2018, the Executive Councillor approved a revised process for funding anti-poverty projects to be delivered by VCS organisations:
  - a. An additional funding priority of 'reducing poverty' to be incorporated into the Council's Community Grants enabling VCS organisations to apply for funding as part of the main grants round.
  - b. An additional budget of £100,000 was allocated to the Community Grants budget for 2019-20. It would not be ring-fenced to the 'reducing poverty' priority but remain flexible to allocate to the best bids from VCS organisations. This is consistent with the current approach to the Community Grants, which has an overall focus on 'reducing social and/or economic inequality'.
  - c. For subsequent years, any additional budgetary allocation to the Community Grants will be made in the Budget Setting Report.
- 3.3 The priorities and outcomes for the Community Grants fund have been updated as follows:

**Priorities** - All applications must demonstrate how the funding will reduce social and/or economic inequality, by removing barriers for City residents with the highest need, to enable them to access one or more of the funding priorities:

- Sporting activities
- Arts and cultural activities
- Community development activities
- Reducing poverty activities
- Legal and/or financial advice<sup>1</sup>
- Employment support or
- Capacity building of the voluntary sector to achieve the above

**Primary Outcome** - Reduce social and/or economic inequality for City residents with the highest needs

**Strategic Outcomes** - As well as the primary outcome activities must achieve one or more of the following strategic outcomes:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Communities come together and bring about change
- More people have better opportunities to gain employment
- Stronger voluntary sector in the city

3.4 The 2019-20 Community Grants programme opened in August 2018 for applications and closed on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. A communications and publicity plan was implemented including a press release, newsletter articles, emails, networking and targeted conversations to promote the grant fund.

3.5 A range of activities have been undertaken to support organisations to understand the funding criteria and requirements needed for a successful application, including:

- Attending organisation's committee meetings, 1-2-1 meetings
- Training sessions and application workshops held jointly with Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS)
- Application Guide and help notes detailing the priorities, outcomes and eligibility criteria and giving guidance on requirements question by question
- Factsheets, templates and signposting to other funding providers
- Engagement with the Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum and individual black and minority ethnic organisations

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<sup>1</sup> Organisations applying to give legal advice and support must have the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) or equivalent

- 3.6 Even though organisations were encouraged to engage with us for help and support with their applications some chose not to and some applications were received which did not meet the basic criteria of the fund, requesting funds for non-targeted activity.
- 3.7 The Community Grants fund continues to accept Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) applications that meet the funding priorities, outcomes and eligibility criteria. DRR contributions from this fund will need to be kept under review to ensure it responds to any changes in Business Rates policy and currently represents good value for money with this budget having to find 40% of any award made under the Business Rate Retention Scheme.
- 3.8 All applications were assessed against the same assessment matrix developed around the priorities and outcome used in previous years, ensuring a consistent approach. These assessments were then moderated by strategy officer meetings informing the award recommendations detailed in Appendix 1. The Executive Councillor attended a meeting with officers to review the process and outcomes.
- 3.9 Where no funding is proposed it will be due to one or more of the following not being adequately met:
- Grant scheme priorities
  - Grant scheme outcomes
  - Identifying need
  - Quality or viability of the project, or
  - Proposals were the remit of another service or organisation such as the County Council, Health, Housing etc
  - Organisations did not demonstrate the beneficiaries could not fund the activity themselves, or that reserves could not be used to fund the activity
- 3.10 If the recommended awards are approved there will be £18,725 remaining. An additional £10,000 will be added to Area Committees for 2019-20 (see 4.1 below) and £8,725 will be available for officers to consider enquiries during the year.

#### **4. Area Committee Community Grants**

- 4.1 The basic Community Grant allocation of £60,000 to Area Committees remains the same for 2019-20. Safer Communities have offered a contribution to the Area Committee grants of £10,000 in previous years

but this will remain in the service budget for 2019-20 to enable the Council to better respond to community priorities as they arise. For 2019-20 an additional £10,000 will be added from the unallocated main fund detailed in 3.10 above.

The chart below shows the amount available by area:

<b>Area Committee</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>North</b>	<b>£24,235</b>
<b>East</b>	<b>£21,295</b>
<b>South</b>	<b>£17,605</b>
<b>West Central</b>	<b>£6,865</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£70,000</b>

- 4.2 The Area Committee grants round has been widely promoted and following the closing dates for applications, assessments will be undertaken and reports taken to each area committee with recommendations for funding.

## **5. Corporate Review of Grants to Voluntary & Community Sector Organisations - Update**

- 5.1 The Council currently awards approximately £1.8m grants to VCS organisations from a number of funds across different service areas. The processes associated with each grant fund have been developed separately over time, with the result that there are significant variations in the way that the different funds are managed. This includes varying degrees of publicity, differing approval processes, decisions being made at different points in the year and varying approaches to monitoring and evaluating of grant-funded projects.

- 5.2 Over the years a number of grant funds have been incorporated into the Community Grants (Community Development Grants, Arts and Recreation Grants and Economic Policy Grants). The remaining funds are as follows:

£689,466	Homelessness Prevention Grants (Housing Services)
£30,000	Sustainable City Grants (Corporate Strategy)
£11,000	Cycling and Walking Grants (Environmental Services)
£2,600	Twinning Grants (Corporate Strategy)

- 5.3 Following a report to this committee in June 2018 officers were asked to:

- Explore the potential for a single corporate grants 'gateway' for grant funds awarded by the Council to VCS organisations. This would bring greater consistency to the Council's grant process by ensuring that all grants are advertised at the same time and following the same application, assessment and approval process and timetable.
- Consider offering some multi-year (up to 3-year) funding allocations to provide greater certainty for projects which require more than one year to develop and deliver. It could also help increase the sustainability of the sector at a time when organisations are experiencing greater financial pressures.

5.4 The key stages of this review included:

- Clarify the criteria, processes and approvals for each of the major grant funds
- Undertake an options appraisal to identify the benefits and risks associated with bringing each of the main grant funds into a single gateway
- Explore the potential for longer term funding

5.5 The mapping work has been completed and further work is now required to look at more detailed process development and feasibility. The outcomes of this will be reported back to this committee in March 2019.

## **6. Neighbourhood Community Partnerships & Projects (NCPs)**

6.1 Following a review in 2014 funding was approved to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 for the three NCPs (Kings Hedges and Arbury NCPs and Abbey People). At this time the organisations were encouraged to maximise opportunities for external funding in order to lessen their financial reliance on the Council in future years. The funding available for this work currently totals £84k which includes support for facilities, staff and project costs.

6.2 In order to align to the Building Stronger Communities strategy, the following changes were agreed to this funding in January 2018:

- The development of a transparent and accountable approach to funding VCS organisations to meet the Council's objectives. This would include the funding available for work currently undertaken by the NCPs and alignment to the community grants process.

- The alignment of resources, targeted at areas of highest need and providing value for money – noting that other areas and organisations may come forward.
- The funding for this type of work to sit within the wider community development resource, so that it can be used flexibly to meet the needs of local communities.

6.3 To support the current NCPs a programme of work was put in place for a transition period and NCPs were asked to:

- submit proposals to undertake community development activity in accordance with the Council's priorities to be considered for funding as follows:
  1. Application for resources for April – September 2018 (reviewed in Autumn 2018)
  2. Application for funding for October – March 2019 (reviewed in March 2019)
  3. Forward planning for 2019-20 early 2019
  4. 2020-21 – grant application criteria and process
- focus on strengthening governance and developing greater independence from the Council and sustainability
- develop partnership working with other local community based organisations

6.4 North Cambridge Community Partnership (NCCP) Update

- The Kings Hedges and Arbury NCPs merged to form the North Cambridge Community Partnership which is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- The NCCP is responsible for the management of 37 Lawrence Way community house and community projects in the Arbury and Kings Hedges areas
- The Council has a service level agreement with the NCCP for the management of Nuns Way Pavilion
- The NCCP are working towards directly managing any workers they require from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, when the Council's temporary contract will cease.

6.5 Abbey People Update

- Gained Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status
- Now employ their own workers independently from the Council
- Deliver community projects in the Abbey area

6.6 Officers have continued to support the NCPs through these interim arrangements to prepare for a more competitive and accountable

process. Following the review of 2018-19 in March 2019 and the development of an application process aligned to community grants from 2020-21, a further report to progress the work will come back to this committee in June 2019.

## **7. Voluntary Sector Support**

- 7.1 The Grants Team continue to work in depth with a range of organisations to help them develop good governance and policies and also work in partnership to support the sector.
- 7.2 Volunteer for Cambridge 2018, held on October 20<sup>th</sup>, saw over 80 organisations and 800 members of the public come together to network and find out more about volunteering and the opportunities available. Initial feedback on the event has been collated and a further follow up will be undertaken to review the success of the event.

## **8. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

- The £900,000 Community Grants budget remains cash-limited and is subject to the Council's budget approval February 2019
- The recommended awards from the Community Grants budget are as set out in Appendix 1
- A £60,000 contribution from this fund is available for Area Committee Community Grants for 2019-20, with an additional £10,000 if there is sufficient remaining after awards are approved.
- An additional £100,000 has been approved for one year for 2019-20 awards to embed the reducing poverty priority. For grants for 2020-21 onwards, any additional budgetary allocation could be made through the Budget Setting Report.

### **(b) Staffing Implications** - There are no staffing implications

### **(c) Equality and Poverty Implications** - Equalities Impact Assessments were carried out as follows:

- December 2013 to inform the Community and Arts and Recreation Development grants review process
- July 2014 in the context of the findings from the review and desktop research to inform the new Community Grants priorities and outcomes
- January 2015 on the implementation of the Community Grants Fund



- June 2018 on the review of funding for anti-poverty projects

- (d) **Environmental Implications** - Funded organisations are expected to have or develop environmental policies.
- (e) **Procurement Implications** - The Council's approach to grant aid through the Community Grants is via an application process rather than through the direct commissioning of services.
- (f) **Community Safety Implications** - The contribution from Safer Communities to Area Committee Grants has been redirected to their main budget to utilise on emerging priorities.
- (g) **Consultation and communication considerations** - Applicants were notified when this report was published detailing recommended awards, giving an indication of proposed funding from April 2019. This adhered to the Cambridgeshire Compact framework to give three months' notice of funding changes. Officers will continue the process of award notification, signposting and support, and implementing and monitoring awards.

## **9. Background papers - None**

## **10. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Community Grants 2019-20 Award Recommendations

## **11. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers, or if you have a query on the report, please contact:

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