

Item

COMMUNITY GRANTS 2021-22

To:

Councillor Anna Smith, Executive Councillor for Communities
Environment & Community Scrutiny Committee 28/01/2021

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, community, and not for profit organisations. It provides an overview of the process, eligibility criteria and budget in Section 3 and Appendix 1 details the applications received with recommendations for 2021-22 awards.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Community Grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2021-22, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, subject to the budget approval in February 2021 and any further satisfactory information required of applicant organisations.
- 2.2 Approve the following grants for 2020-21 as detailed in Section 4:
- a) £15,000 – Cambridge Online (devices and data)
 - b) £10,000 – Cambridge Sustainable Food (hygiene and food supplies)
 - c) £20,000 – Cambridgeshire Community Foundation (Coronavirus Fund donation for City projects)

3. Background

3.1 **Corporate Grants Gateway** – Following a review in 2018, the gateway was implemented in 2019 to achieve greater transparency, consistency and accountability of grants to voluntary and community sector organisations for the following major grant funds:

- Community Grants
- Area Committee Community Grants
- Homelessness Prevention Grants
- Sustainable City Grants

3.2 These funds are now managed by one team using the same process and timescale. The awards are considered across the funds at the same time to ensure a consistent and accountable process by experienced officers from the different service areas. The funds remain within their appropriate portfolios for decision making and to ensure alignment to each fund's strategic priorities.

3.3 **The Community Grants** fund was established in 2015-16 following a review of Community and Arts and Recreation Development Grants. In June 2018 an additional funding priority, 'reducing poverty', was added to the priorities listed below.

3.4 **The priorities and outcomes** for the Community Grants fund are 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
- 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 need

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

- 3.5 **Budget** – there is a budget of £1,040,000 available for Community Grants 2021-22 subject to approval of the Council’s budget in February 2021. This is made up as follows:
- £1,010,000 core budget
 - £30,000 proposed in the Budget Setting Report for one year only. Covid related pressures have meant demand on the Community Grants Fund is greater than anticipated. To accommodate this, and support the excellent work being undertaken by the community and voluntary sector, this bid will enable a one-off increase to the grant funding available in 2021/22.
- 3.6 £70,000 of this amount is allocated to Area Committee Community Grants as in previous years (see paragraph 3.14)
- 3.7 The 2021-22 Community Grants programme opened in August 2020 for applications and closed on 5th October 2020. A communications and publicity plan was implemented including a press release, newsletter articles, workshops, emails, networking and targeted conversations to promote the grant fund.
- 3.8 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
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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

legislation and currently represents good value for money with this budget having to find 40% of any award made under the Business Rate Retention Scheme.

- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 Where no funding is proposed it will be due to one or more of the following not being adequately met:
- Grant scheme priorities and/or 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
 - Applications will be signposted to Area Committee or alternative funding streams
- 3.13 If the recommended awards are approved the budget will be spent in full.
- 3.14 **Area Committees** - 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. The chart below shows the amount available by area last year as an indicative amount:

Area Committee	2020-21
North	£24,220
East	£21,140
South	£17,780
West Central	£6,860
Total	£70,000

- 3.15 **Voluntary Sector Support** - 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.

4. Grant Awards 2020-21

- 4.1 The 2020-21 applications and allocations were made before Covid 19. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic some organisations have been unable to spend the grant they were awarded this year as projects could not be undertaken. Although we took a flexible approach and enabled organisations to deliver projects in different ways or to be adapted to provide Covid 19 support, some funding has been unallocated or returned.
- 4.2 The third national lockdown has highlighted some specific needs and funding, now available in the grants budget for the current year, is proposed for the following projects to support those needs:
- a) £15,000 for digital devices and data (Cambridge Online)
 - b) £10,000 for hygiene and food supplies (Cambridge Sustainable Food)
 - c) £20,000 donation to the Cambridgeshire Coronavirus Fund for city projects (Cambridgeshire Community Foundation). A council officer will sit on the assessment panel.

5. Implications

- a) **Financial Implications** - Set out in section 3 of the report
- b) **Staffing Implications** - There are no staffing implications
- c) **Equality and Poverty Implications** - Equalities Impact Assessments were carried out as follows:
 - 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** - Some of the funded projects will have a positive impact on community safety.

6. Consultation and communication considerations

Applicants were notified when this report was published detailing recommended awards, giving an indication of proposed funding from April

2021. 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.

7. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Grants 2021-22 Award Recommendations

9. Inspection of papers

If you have a query on the report please contact Jackie Hanson, Community Funding & Development Manager, tel: 01223 - 457867, email: jackie.hanson@cambridge.gov.uk