

COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME DRAFT ALLOCATIONS 2023/24

People & Places Advisory Committee - 23 February 2023

Report of: Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer People & Places

Status: For Decision

Also considered by:

Cabinet - 16th March 2023

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary This report sets out information about the Community Grant Scheme and summarises applications received by the Council from voluntary organisations for funding during 2023/24.

This report supports the Key Aim of: the Council's Community Plan.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Lesley Dyball

Contact Officer(s): Jenny Godfrey x7112; Kathryn Bone, Ext. 7176

Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee:

That Members note this report.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- (a) Grants, as set out in Appendix C of this report, be approved subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 11.

Reason for recommendation: Applications received have been appraised according to the Council's Guidelines and those recommended for funding support the aims of the scheme and represent value for money.

Introduction and Background

1. The Council's Community Grant Scheme supports local charities and voluntary sector organisations that, through their work, contribute to the priorities set out in the Community Plan 2022-32.
2. The Council's Corporate Code of Practice for making grants was reviewed in 2022 and a revised Code of Practice was agreed at Cabinet on 7 July 2022. This is attached at Appendix A.

3. The grant guidelines were reviewed in 2022 and revised guidelines were agreed by Cabinet on 7 July 2022. These guideline documents can be found at Appendix B.
4. In 2022/23, the grants awarded through the Community Grant Scheme enabled voluntary organisations to support 35,937 volunteer hours in the Sevenoaks District, which represented an economic benefit of £633k.

Details of the Community Grant Scheme for 2023/24

5. The grant scheme was publicised widely across the District within the voluntary sector, through the virtual Voluntary Sector Forum, Town and Parish Councils, In Shape Magazine, Social Media and local press in September 2022. The closing date was 3 November 2022. The total budget available for distribution to voluntary sector organisations in 2023/24 is £153,340, including £98,540 for Citizens' Advice in the District, £2,500 for the Sevenoaks District Arts Council (SDAC) and £2,500 for the Sevenoaks District Sports Council (SDSC). Funding for Citizens' Advice, SDAC and SDSC is subject to Service Level Agreements. The amount available for the Community Grants Scheme is £49,800.
6. A total of 31 grant applications have been received, representing total grant requests of £116,742.
7. A full schedule of applications is attached at Appendix C. The Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder for People & Places has copies of all of the applications and a full set is available via One Drive (access instructions provided separately on request). Officers would be pleased to deal with any detailed queries in advance of the meeting.

Appraisal Process

8. Members will appreciate that the recommended grants in Appendix C have been put forward following an appraisal by Officers trained in grant appraisal and a detailed consultation with the Portfolio Holder for People & Places, Cllr Dyball and the Deputy Portfolio Holder for People & Places, Cllr Collins. Recommendations have been made in accordance with the Scheme Guidelines and the Council's Corporate Code of Practice for grants and take into account various factors, including:
 - the extent to which the application supports the District Council's Community Plan priorities;
 - the extent to which the application assists residents across the District and its impact;
 - the extent to which the application should be funded by other organisations;
 - whether performance indicators are relevant and appropriate;

- whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria established in the Guidelines and the Corporate Code of Practice for grants;
- whether the applicant has appropriate child protection and safeguarding arrangements in place.
- Cross-departmental checks and information shares about grants and funding being awarded to community and voluntary organisations and any issues arising.

Recommended Level of Grant

9. A full list of grants recommended to voluntary organisations is attached at Appendix C.
10. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the reason for this decision, and encouraged to contact the District Council's Funding Officers and visit KCC's online free, comprehensive grant search database for advice and support in seeking funding elsewhere if appropriate.

Recommended Conditions

11. It is recommended that grants be made to voluntary organisations subject to the following conditions:
 - That performance indicators as set out in the application forms are adhered to and monitored;
 - That appropriate Safeguarding policies and arrangements are in place, where necessary;
 - That appropriate recognition of this Council's funding contribution is made in all their publicity; and
 - Where services are provided over a wider area than the District boundaries, organisations will be required to hold grant aid from this Council in a restricted fund for the benefit of Sevenoaks District residents;

Key Implications

Financial

12. The level of funding is in accordance with the draft 2023/24 budget of £153,340.

Resources (Non Financial)

13. The work connected with the Community Grant Scheme administration and monitoring is being undertaken through existing resources.

Legal implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

14. There are no legal issues relating to this report. All organisations applying for funding are required to have an equalities policy (or have signed to say they will adhere to the District Council's policy) and where appropriate child protection and/or adult protection policies.
15. The following table shows the risks and their mitigation.

Risk	Mitigation
Grants allocated are lower than requested	Application forms ask whether the project could continue if funding were reduced. Appraisal looks at realistic performance indicators for the amount of grant recommended. Performance indicators are agreed with Voluntary and Community Groups.
As a condition of the grant any organisation allocating onward funding on behalf of the Council to another organisation must check whether appropriate police checks and child or vulnerable adult protection policies are in place.	Condition of grant to ensure checks carried out and that application forms seek confirmation. Monitoring process to confirm an effective process is in place.
Grant allocations not approved in March.	A timetable is in place to ensure grants are considered by Cabinet in March and processes in place to ensure grant payments are made in the first week of the financial year.

Equality Assessment

16. Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this report directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The summary results of this analysis are set out immediately below.

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	This community grant scheme assists with the provision of services to support Sevenoaks District residents, particularly those in the greatest need. Therefore this decision being made or recommended through this paper does not have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes	The grant scheme provides funding for specific groups, such as older people, families, young people and people with disabilities. The grants scheme is widely publicised to ensure that groups serving a wide range of needs are able to apply.
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		No negative impacts identified

Net Zero Implications

17. The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

Conclusions

18. The work of the voluntary sector across the Sevenoaks District is highly valued. The Council's grants programme supports the dedication and commitment of the many volunteers who help the most vulnerable people in the District. Members are asked to agree the draft grant allocations as set out in Appendix C.

Appendices

Appendix A - Council's Corporate Code of Practice for making grants

Appendix B - Community Grant Scheme guidelines

Appendix C - Full Schedule of applications

Sarah Robson

Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer People & Places