



# Cabinet

9 March 2022

**Report of:** Councillor Alison Freer - Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement

## Allocation of Community Grants 2022/23

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Excellent Services positively impacting on our communities.
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	All Wards
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes c) Has significant impact on two or more wards in the Borough and on communities living or working in those areas
<b>Subject to call-in:</b>	Yes

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Community Grants Scheme supports local community and voluntary organisations to deliver activities that benefit residents in the area. Applications for the financial year 2022/23 have been assessed.
- 1.2 The recommended allocations follow a robust assessment process by a panel consisting of the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Environment, Director for Housing and Communities, Leisure Culture and People Manager and Community Policy Officer. The Panel assessed the grants in line with the criteria set out within the approved Community Grants Policy.
- 1.3 The Policy ensures there is an underpinning appraisal and assessment upon which the grants can be awarded, using a community centred approach that will enable the Council to get best value from the budget available for Community Grants.
- 1.4 This report outlines and seeks approval for the award of the Community Grants budget for the financial year 2022/23. This report also includes a proposal to repurpose unallocated funds to create a one-off Platinum Jubilee Grant Fund.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

### That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves the award of Community Grants as detailed in Appendix A
- 2.2 Approves the use of £2,040 unallocated funds for the 22/23 community grants budget plus £5,088 unallocated funds from the 21/22 community grants budget to create a one-off Community Grants Fund of £7,128 specifically for the Platinum Jubilee
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Director of Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Environment, to develop and implement a Platinum Jubilee Community Grants Scheme for Melton

## 3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council's investment in a Community Grants Scheme enables a fund for community groups and voluntary agencies to bid for. The grants support the corporate theme of "Helping People" and the Council's role both as supporter and enabler of community-based activities. The allocation of the grants is important in supporting activities that benefit the residents of the Borough and bring positive social value.
- 3.2 The proposed allocation of grants for 2022/23 has been made following a robust, clear and transparent assessment panel approach in line with the approved Community Grants Policy criteria.
- 3.3 This year will be a unique one with the Borough preparing for Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. The Council has an opportunity to expand the reach of the Community Grants budget to enable community organisations to bid for grant funding to support and enable their Jubilee celebrations.
  - 3.3.1 This also provides the Council an opportunity to enhance its community leadership role in supporting Melton communities with Jubilee celebrations.
  - 3.3.2 Delegated authority to develop and implement Platinum Jubilee Community Grants Scheme for Melton is requested to enable this to be progressed in readiness for the Jubilee. It is proposed this would be best delivered as a small grants scheme, with maximum allocations not exceeding £1,000.

## 4 Background

- 4.1 In October 2019, Cabinet approved the new policy for awarding community grants in future years.
- 4.2 Discussions with Elected Members and wider public consultations shaped the policy framework to ensure the Council secures best value from the budget available for Community Grants going forward.
- 4.3 The agreed process for Community Grants allocation has been replicated this year to ensure an open and transparent allocation of the budget.
- 4.4 The Council's investment in a Community Grants Scheme enables a fund for community groups and voluntary agencies to bid for. The grants support the corporate theme of "Helping People" and the Council's role both as supporter and enabler of community-based activities. The allocation of the grants is important in supporting activities that benefit the residents of the Borough and bring positive social value.
- 4.5 In assessing the applications, the panel also considered other match funding opportunities to assist bidders including opportunities to make use of social value elements of key contracts. This has enabled an opportunity to create a one-off Platinum Jubilee Community Small Grants Scheme. Further details are set out later in the report.

## 5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 The application window was open from October 2021 to December 2021 and eligible Community Groups were encouraged to apply.
- 5.2 Subject to approval of the 2022/23 budget in February 2022 the total grant funding available for 2022/2023 is £44,490. Subject to approval to carry forward £5,088 remaining from the 2021/22 budget creates a grant pot of £49,578.
- 5.3 16 applications for funding were received, with bids totalling £99,201.
- 5.4 Applications were assessed in line with the eligibility criteria set out in [Section 2](#) of the Community Grants Policy.
- 5.5 Those applicants that were eligible to bid for Community Grants funding were then assessed in accordance with their ability to demonstrate how they meet the criteria ([section 3](#)) set out within the Community Grants Policy. These are:
  - a) A clear contribution to the Council's Corporate People Priorities – 'Excellent Services positively impacting on our communities'.
  - b) Value added self-help activities such as volunteer resources, match funding and active engagement with the Melton Community Lottery.
  - c) A breakdown of how the money will be spent and considerations for long term sustainability.
- 5.6 Running in conjunction with the Community Grants budget, Melton Community Lottery is in place to provide further opportunities for organisations to raise additional funds. Whilst it is not a requirement to access community grant funding, organisations applying for this fund

are encouraged to consider becoming members of the Melton Lottery as this is a way to generate funding to support their activities.

- 5.6.1 Of the successful applicants for the current funding round, 11 are also members of the Melton Community Lottery.
- 5.7 In order to achieve greater reach and value for money from the community grants fund, officers have also actively engaged with organisations where appropriate to explore alternative and match funding opportunities for their activities. For example, linking eligible groups to a mental health funding opportunity, and exploring the social value element of key contractors working with the council.
- 5.8 This year, officers have worked with one of our key contractors, Axis, to explore the potential for a joined-up approach to utilising the Social Value commitments they have made for the Melton Borough to offset some of the monetary contributions requested from the community grants scheme.
- 5.8.1 Axis' Social Value commitments are not necessarily given as cash but can be works or repairs undertaken to a specific value for community organisations and can demonstrate a social value for the residents of the Borough. Whilst Axis are a housing services contractor, the social value element of the contract is intended to have wider community benefit.
- 5.8.2 A positive example of this in the current grant funding round, is a community grants application from Age UK applied to undertake essential refurbishment of their hall to allow them to continue to provide a valued service for Melton's older residents whilst also helping them generate additional rental income by increasing users of the space. Instead of using the Community grant funds to make a contribution to the repairs, positive negotiation between the Council, Axis and Age UK means that Axis will undertake these repairs.
- 5.8.3 This approach with Axis will be continued for the duration of their existing contract. Where practical assistance may not be appropriate, Axis are also able to provide a link into other potential funding through Axis Foundation and Travis Perkins.
- 5.9 The successful grant awards and allocated amounts awarded are set out below:
- 5.9.1 Please note, of those where a successful award was made, the full amount has not been awarded in every case. Allocations were considered on a case-by-case basis with a clear rationale for the funded amount in each case.
- 5.9.2 Where alternative support has been secured instead of community grant funding, this is also shown in the table below:

<b>Successful grant funding applications (2022/23)</b>			
<b>Organisation / Group</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Provisional Allocation</b>	<b>Overview of Approved Activity / Project to be funded</b>
Without Walls Christian Fellowship	£5,000	£1,000	Charity run singing café to aid Mental Health and combat social isolation. Offer of smaller amount of funding to assist with set up. Signpost to match funding opportunity.
Belvoir Cricket & Countryside Trust	£1,217	£1,200	Seasonal Cricket/Basketball Sessions aimed at priority neighbourhoods targeting children from low-income families. Funding to cover project costs.

Asfordby Amateurs Ladies and Inclusive FC	£1,525	£1,500	Funding allocation towards purchase of 11 a side football goals. Football club committed to fund remaining costs.
Access All Areas	£8,000	£5,000	Provide funding to expand services and become the Access 4 All Wellbeing Café; an extension of Access All Areas careers and employment services. Agree to £5,000 in order to support getting the project off the ground. Also provided information relating to Crisis café funding and encouraged to apply to that as a mental health specific match funding opportunity
Peppers – A Safe Place	£18,304	£1,000	Offer funds towards equipment and activities as the Community Grants budget is not able to fund salary costs requested for manager of a mental health and wellbeing group.
Melton & Oakham Waterways Society	£4,000	£4,000	Funding to purchase an underwater weed cutter to start the process of improving Melton waterways. Agree to fund. Climate and environment links to community benefit were demonstrated within this application.
Dove Cottage Day Hospice	£2,500	£2,500	Funding for equipment and resources for Dementia Day care offer at Dove Cottage.
Citizens Advice Leicestershire (CitAL)	£19,046	£17,000	Funding for Melton Advice Service. Panel noted limited grants budget and expectation that organisations strive to offset project costs. Agree to fund £17,000 to maintain the online service. The contribution offered covers the delivery costs requested plus 50% contribution to organisational overheads.
Melton Mowbray Lions Club	£9,500	£2,250	A number of projects were put forward in the application. Agree to fund chatter club and inclusive sport along with additional amount for equipment and promotion.
Unlock Your You	£5,000	£1,000	Funding to assist with start of care café and wellbeing hub project. Information provided regarding the Crisis Café funding available and encouraged to apply to that as a mental health specific match funding opportunity.

279 (Melton Mowbray) Squadron RAF Cadets	£1,500	£1,000	Funding towards purchase of outdoor leadership equipment to enhance the existing training provided for cadets.
Melton Furniture Project	£10,109	£5,000	Funding towards up to twelve MBC referrals and associated admin costs.
Age UK Leicestershire	£3000		Axis agreement to enable the works requested - towards refurbishment of the great hall at Gloucester House Resource Centre [this application was eligible for community grants funding but agreement for Axis to cover the requested works instead]

- 5.10 The total value of the proposed grant awards from the community grants scheme totals to £42,450 from the 2022/23 budget. This leaves £2,040 unallocated.
- 5.11 The proposed allocation sees a wide range of services and several smaller local services benefit from the Community Grants fund.
- 5.12 The services offered from these organisations are diverse, ranging from sporting and activity-based projects, mental health and employment and skills support. The approved projects also cover demographics of the Borough across a life course.
- 5.13 Several of the awards support organisations to set up a sustainable delivery model by providing funding for equipment so they can deliver and sustain the service without relying on ongoing funding.
- 5.14 Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback along with advice and guidance on alternative funding options including the self-funding opportunities available through the Melton Community Lottery.
- 5.15 It is proposed to use the unallocated funds (£2,040) plus the funds remaining from the remaining from 2021/22 community grants budget (£5,088) to create a one-off small grants fund of **£7,128** specifically for the Platinum Jubilee which would be open to eligible groups to bid for grants to support Jubilee celebrations across the Borough. Using the same eligibility criteria as the existing grants scheme, but with platinum jubilee specific prioritisation criteria a scheme could be developed and implemented in readiness for the Jubilee.

## 6 Options Considered

- 6.1 Cabinet could choose not to allocate the funds in line with the recommendations made. This is not recommended because the proposed allocations are in line with the associated policy framework and the budget is available for this purpose. The panel considered a range of factors such as availability of alternative funding, funding specific elements of a wider project, value for money etc to reach the proposed recommendations.
- 6.2 Cabinet could choose not to repurpose the remaining funds and / or the budget carried forward from 2021/22 to create a Platinum Jubilee Grants Scheme. Instead, the remaining funds could be carried forward, offered as a saving or allocated across the successful bids. This is a matter for Cabinet to consider. A one-off Jubilee grant funding round is recommended as it would be positive for the residents of Melton and would positively

demonstrate the Council's community leadership role, whilst remaining within existing budget constraints.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 Discussions with Elected Members and wider public consultations shaped the framework of the Community Grants policy which was approved by Cabinet in October 2019.
- 7.2 Each year a robust and transparent process is applied to allocate grants in line with the eligibility criteria policy framework by a panel which also includes the Portfolio Holder and lead officers.

## **8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication**

- 8.1 All applicants will be given feedback and signposted to alternative support, funding avenues and the lottery where appropriate.
- 8.2 A communications plan will be developed to ensure ongoing visibility of the reach and impact of the community grants scheme, including opportunities to showcase the activities and value provided by the partners and projects throughout the year.
- 8.3 Officers will continue discussions with key contractors to ensure social value is maximised for Melton. This may require a policy amendment to embed fully as a consideration in future years' community grants funding rounds.
- 8.4 Subject to Cabinet approval, a one-off Platinum Jubilee Community Grants fund will be developed and implemented, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Environment.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The total community grant budget included within the draft budget proposals to be put forward for approval is for 2022/23 is £44,490.
- 9.2 The amount of proposed grant awards comes to a total of £42,450 leaving a remaining budget of £2,040.
- 9.3 A total of £5,088 remains unallocated from the community grant funding round in 2021/22.
- 9.4 It is proposed to use the unallocated funds (£2,040) plus the funds remaining from the remaining from 2021/22 community grants budget (£5,088) to create a one-off small grants fund of **£7,128** specifically for Platinum Jubilee.
- 9.5 These proposals will require a carry forward of the unused funding from 2021/22 to the 2022/23 financial year.

Financial Implications reviewed by: **Director for Corporate Services**

## **10 Legal and Governance Implications**

10.1 The Council has the power to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising this power, the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making the decision the Council must have considered only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives, and not acted unreasonably. The Council's Grants Policy provides a consistent basis upon which grants are awarded and reviewed and is a clear statement of the criteria that the Council is applying when considering Grants. Compliance is essential if the Council is to defend any challenge to its decision-making process.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Senior Solicitor**

## 11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

11.1 The Community Grants Policy went through a thorough Check and Challenge process using an Equality Impact Assessment. The allocation of funding is based on the Policy and therefore any annual grants in line with the policy do not require a further EIA.

## 12 Community Safety Implications

12.1 Allocation of the grants in line with the new policy is considered to have a positive impact on community safety as part of the corporate priorities that the grants have been scored against.

## 13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

13.1 A diverse range of proposals are considered within the application, some of which will also have a positive impact on the environment.

## 14 Other Implications (where significant)

14.1 The community grants allocation process ensures maximum social value is gained as well as covering as far as possible a broad range of community projects which have a direct positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents of the Borough.

14.2

## 15 Risk & Mitigation

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Challenge from unsuccessful organisations who do not receive any or all of the grant requested and subsequent reputational damage.	Low	Negligible	6

Impact / Consequences			
Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic



<b>Likelihood</b>	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High				
	4 Significant				
	3 Low		1		
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

<b>Risk No</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>1</b>	<p>The decision-making process used by the panel is open and transparent using the policy framework to guide decisions. Match funding opportunities have been explored to increase reach and impact. Feedback will be provided to applicants.</p> <p>A continued positive impact as the public see a wide range of services and smaller local organisations benefit from the Community Grants fund.</p>

## 16 Background Papers

16.1 The Community Grants Policy can be found via this [link](#).

## 17 Appendices

17.1 Appendix A: Proposed Grant Awards 2022/23

<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Aysha Rahman</b> , Leisure, Culture and People Manager
<b>Report Author Contact Details:</b>	01664 502502 arahman@melton.gov.uk
<b>Chief Officer Responsible:</b>	<b>Michelle Howard</b> , Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
<b>Chief Officer Contact Details:</b>	01664 504322 mhoward@melton.gov.uk