



# Cabinet

18 March 2020

**Report of:** Councillor Alison Freer-Jones -  
Portfolio Holder for Corporate  
Governance, Access and  
Engagement

## Allocation of Community Grants

<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	<p>Helping people fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions.</p> <p>Working with our partners to address vulnerability and tackle the root causes of social problems, building safe, happy and healthy communities.</p> <p>Focussing on our priority neighbourhoods, supporting people to overcome disadvantage and live well independently.</p>
<b>Relevant Ward Member(s):</b>	
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	Choose date
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<p>Yes</p> <p>c) Has significant impact on two or more wards in the Borough and on communities living or working in those areas</p>
<b>Subject to call-in:</b>	Yes

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines and seeks approval for the award of the Community Grants budget for the financial year 2020/21. The recommended allocations follow a robust assessment process by a panel consisting of the Portfolio Holder, The People Manager and the Community Policy Officer. The Panel assessed the grants in line with the approach set out within the recently approved Community Grants Policy.
- 1.2 The Policy ensures there is an underpinning appraisal and assessment upon which the grants can be awarded. It is an interim step towards a longer term vision of a community

commissioning approach that will enable the Council to get best value from the budget available for Community Grants.

<b>2 Recommendation(s)</b>
That Cabinet:  2.1 approve the award of Community Grants as detailed in Appendix B; 2.2 approve a delegation for the Director for Housing and Communities to approve in-year small grants awards, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for the remaining budget during 2020/21.

### **3 Reason for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The allocation of the grants has been made following a robust, clear and transparent assessment panel in line with the recently approved Community Grants Policy.
- 3.2 The Policy itself was developed following public and internal stakeholder consultations throughout June to September which included Scrutiny Committee. Results of the consultations demonstrated overwhelming support for the principles shaping the new process.

### **4 Options Considered**

- 4.1 Maintain the Status Quo of Community Grants Allocations - this would go against the principles of the new policy.

### **5 Background**

- 5.1 In October 2019, Cabinet approved the new policy for awarding community grants in future years.
- 5.2 Discussions with Elected Members and wider public consultations shaped the framework within the Policy to ensure the Council secures best value from the budget available for Community Grants going forward.

### **6 Main Considerations**

- 6.1 Following approval of the policy, the application window was opened for 11 weeks and Community Groups were encouraged to apply.
- 6.2 The total grant available for 2020/2021 is £53,620. This includes a one-off contribution of £10,000 identified during the budget setting process.
- 6.3 20 organisations applied for funding totalling £126,510.68, a summary of the organisations and applications are available in Appendix A.
- 6.4 Applications received were assessed and scored in accordance with their ability to demonstrate how they meet the criteria set out within the Community Grants Policy. These are:

- A clear contribution to one or more of the Council's Corporate People Priorities:
- Helping people fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions.
- Working with our partners to address vulnerability and tackle the root causes of social problems, building safe, happy and healthy communities.
- Focussing on our priority neighbourhoods, supporting people to overcome disadvantage and live well independently.
- Value added self help activities such as volunteer resources, match funding and active engagement with the Melton Community Lottery.
- A breakdown of how the money will be spent and considerations for long term sustainability.

6.5 There was also a 'proportionality weighting' which evaluated the funds requested against the service being delivered.. Whether an applicant had made efforts to secure additional funding through the Melton Community Lottery was also considered, with those who have sought to use this route securing additional credit for doing so.

6.6 The successful organisations and the amounts awarded (ranked from highest to lowest score) are shown in Appendix B. It should be noted that some of the successful organisations are not proposed to receive the full amount requested.

The amount of the proposed awards totals to £50,934.

6.7 The proposed allocation sees a wider range of services and a number of smaller local services benefit from the Community Grants fund than has previously been possible.

6.8 The services offered from these organisations include Mental Health training and support to develop life skills and enhance development whilst providing volunteering opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities; early years provision including help for families, services helping to improve rural and social inclusion via access to better internet and other services will also benefit from funding; organisations aiding those older people within the Borough in order to promote independence whilst also helping combat loneliness and advice & guidance services will continue to receive funding. There will be an additional focus on services promoting Wellbeing, Health and Arts & Culture.

6.9 This year's awards aim to benefit more people with a wider positive impact than we have seen previously. A number of the awards support an organisation to set up a delivery model by providing the infrastructure or equipment so they can continue to deliver the service on an ongoing basis without relying on ongoing funding. There are some potential impacts in relation to services currently funded by the Council but work to mitigate these is underway and considered in the 'Consultation' section below.

6.10 Based on the proposed allocations, £2,686 remains which will be set aside to be considered for any requests that come in through the year. This is in line with Scrutiny recommendations.

6.11 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.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 The policy itself was developed following public and internal stakeholder consultations throughout June to September which included Scrutiny Committee.
- 7.2 Results of the consultations demonstrated overwhelming support for the principles shaping the new process.
- 7.3 An initial consultation has recently taken place with Citizens Advice Leicestershire (CAL) as, if the proposed allocations are agreed, they will see a reduction of £19,000 in funding for the year 2020/2021. This was to discuss potential implications and explore alternative delivery options and an agreement in principle has been reached as follows:
- The service will continue to run on the current basis (session hours and premises costs) for a maximum of six months until 30th September 2020.
  - During this six month period but as soon as is possibly practical, CAL and the Council will work together to explore the option of operating a largely remote service with limited face to face delivery from either Parkside, Phoenix House and/or the Children's Centres for crisis management support.
  - The intention is to reach a consensus on what more focussed remote service delivery would look like by the end of May at the latest. The earlier a proposal is agreed, the more financial flexibility will be available for the newly agreed model.
  - All parties are fully aware that, if an agreement is not able to be reached on the above, then CAL will cease to run it's face to face delivery from Melton from the 1st October. The national telephone and web-based services will still be available.

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

- 8.1 All successful, partially successful and unsuccessful applicants will be given feedback and signposted to alternative support, funding avenues and the lottery where appropriate.
- 8.2 Discussions will continue to take place with CAL to explore and reach agreement on the partial remote service referred to in 7.3.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The total community grant budget set for 2020/21 is £53,620 which is partly offset by a contribution from the lottery scheme of £3,620. The amount of the proposed awards comes to a total of £50,934, leaving a remaining budget of £2,686 which will be put aside to be considered for any requests that come in through the year. It is proposed delegated authority is given to Director for Housing and Communities; in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to award grants from the remaining budget allocation.
- 9.2 There is a potential reduction or loss in rental income from Citizen's Advice Leicestershire of up to £15,000 per annum. The initial proposals set out in 7.3 may see an in-year reduction in 2020/21 of rental income of between £7,500 to £11,250 (This will depend on how quickly a new model can be agreed). In future years from 2021/22 if the full rental

income is lost then the Council may need to consider a reduction in the overall community grants budget provision to help mitigate all or some of this loss.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate Services – 09.03.20**

## **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 the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making the decision the Council must have taken into account 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: Legal & Governance Manager – 10.03.20**

## **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 None

## **14 Other Implications (where significant)**

14.1 None

## **15 Risk & Mitigation**

15.1 The main risk identified for consideration is managing the organisational, financial and public impact from the reduction in funding to CAL. Ongoing discussions are taking place with CAL to manage delivery of a partially remote service with no immediate impact to the service as described in 7.3.

15.2 In the event an agreement fails to be reached on a service as described in 7.3, CAL is likely to remove its face to face service.

15.3 It is also important to note that there should also be a positive impact as the public start to see a wider range of services and smaller local organisations benefit from the Community Grants fund.

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Impact of reduced funding for CAL could force the organisation to close its Melton based face to face support	Significant	Critical	Medium Risk
2	Impact of reduced funding for CAL forces them to move premises reducing rental income for Parkside	High	Marginal	Medium Risk
3	Challenge / reputational impact from media, community and unsuccessful / partially successful applicants.	High	Marginal	Medium Risk

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High		2,3		
	4 Significant			1	
	3 Low				
	2 Very Low				
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Discussions are currently taking place with CAL regarding what can realistically be delivered with the funding available including the option of a more focussed remote service. This will also include the options for referring to the national web and telephone based support.
2	Corporately, the use of space at Parkside for commercial purposes is currently being assessed and alternative options will need to be considered as part of this. This may also include the potential to reduce the CAL footprint, from 4 to 2 desks.

	This will lead to continued income received from CAL, albeit a smaller rate, and also ensure they retain a presence within the building. This would also be subject to successful negotiation with CAL.
<b>3</b>	<p>The Council has undergone a very thorough and transparent funding allocation process which received public and member support during consultation.</p> <p>Failure to allocate the funds according to the outcome of the fair process applied may subject the Council to challenge and consequently more damaging reputational impact.</p> <p>Verbal feedback will be given to individual organisations and advice where appropriate on alternative sources of support.</p>

## **16 Background Papers**

16.1 None

## **17 Appendices**

17.1 Appendix A Summary of Organisations and Applications

17.2 Appendix B - Successful Organisations And The Amounts Awarded

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