

CORPORATE GRANT SCHEMES (Community and Economic Development Grants)

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

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Wards Affected: All

Key Decision: No

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to present to the Cabinet Grants Panel four Community Grant applications for consideration.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Cabinet Grants Panel are requested to consider and decide upon:
 - ***The recommendation for each of the applications detailed, summaries of which are attached in Appendix A***

Summary

3. A summary of the applications to be considered and the recommendations from the Community Grants Assessment Group are provided as to the level of financial assistance that should be awarded to each organisation. These are detailed in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Background

4. Applications for all grants and the Release of S106 contributions are assessed against a standard checklist and considered by the officer Grants Assessment Group to ensure a consistent approach to the awarding of funds.

Assessment Process

5. Applications are assessed against four key criteria – Council priorities, evidence of need, financial impact and benefits. The maximum possible score, for excellent applications which fully meet all the criteria, is 12.
6. Applications are assessed by the Grants Assessment Group comprising relevant officers from across the authority together with a representative from West Sussex County Council's Communities and Public Health Teams, and, unless there is a conflict of interest, the local Council for Voluntary Service.
7. The Group reaches a consensus as to the merit of each application, judged against the agreed criteria, and the level of funding that should be recommended to the Cabinet Grants Panel.

Table 1: Applications recommended for award

Organisation	Grant Purpose	Award Requested	Award Suggested
Scrapless CIC	Purchase fridges in order to store left over fruit and vegetables which will be offered to Burgess Hill Pantry for residents at subsidised cost. Deliver cooking demonstrations.	£1,600	£1,600
	TOTAL	£1,600	£1,600

Table 2: Applications Considered but NO GRANT Award Recommended

Organisation	Purpose for which grant is sought	Award requested
Befriended	Afternoon Tea with entertainment on first Sunday of every month	£5,000
Relate North & South West Sussex	Counselling sessions in East Grinstead and surrounding areas	£2,000
*Citizens Advice West Sussex	Pilot project supporting victims of domestic abuse providing legal, financial, and practical advice for victims who are assessed as 'medium' risk.	£4,909
	TOTAL	£11,909

*The bid has been referred to the Mid Sussex Partnership (MSP) funding for consideration - see paragraph 10

8. All organisations presented have met the current basic level grant criteria, i.e., they are fully constituted voluntary and not for profit organisations and have provided the relevant information to support their application.

Grant Applications Recommended for approval under the Community Fund

9. Scrapless CIC is a green business providing low-waste food and cleaning products via a simple refill system. The shop also hosts workshops and events with the aim of becoming a community eco-hub for the local area. The group are seeking funds to purchase two fridges so that they can store left over fruit and vegetables from nearby farms and offer this to the Burgess Hill Pantry for their members at subsidised prices. The aim is to support local businesses and reduce waste. They are also planning to offer free cooking demonstrations to the local community to encourage healthy eating. The Assessment Team praised the partnership working demonstrated in this project that seeks to solve the issue of food waste, food poverty and the need to improve healthy eating. The project is recommended to be fully funded.

Grant Applications not recommended for approval under the Community Fund

10. Citizens Advice have identified a gap in services supporting victims of domestic abuse who are in the 'medium' risk category. Following consultations with experts in the field, local authorities (including MSDC), and existing providers they propose to set up a pilot project to meet this need. The project aims to support victims of domestic abuse who are currently without support to be empowered to exit the abuse but remain in their home, work, regain control of their finances and keep their network of support for themselves and their families
11. Due to the project proposals being closely aligned with the key priorities set in the Community Safety Partnership Sub-Group and work being funded by the Police and Crime Commissioners office, this application has been referred to the Community Safety Partnership for consideration as a more appropriate funding pathway than the community grants programme. This will ensure that any funded projects are complimentary.
12. The application from Befriended for Afternoon Tea sessions is for a project that has already started. The criteria excludes retrospective bids and it is therefore recommended not to fund the project.
13. Relate North and South West Sussex have been previously funded for this project and the bid is for core costs. In accordance with the updated criteria, repeat applications and core costs are excluded. The Assessment Team, however, recognise the importance of counselling services, particularly with the impact of Covid on people's mental health and the team will work with the organisation to explore how the service can be supported going forward.

Underrepresented Groups

14. There are currently discussions taking place with partners to encourage applications from underrepresented groups. Officers are working with the Community Champions project to identify needs and gaps in services where funding could set up projects as a response. There are currently plans to hold targeted community event days to encourage engagement and networking. The Community Champions project is developing plans to establish a 'Language café' in partnership with other key providers. It is hoped an application to support this project will be submitted for the next grant round. Champions have also identified a need for re-training programmes for those who have become redundant/lost their jobs due to Covid. This is particularly relevant for those working in the service industry and where there are higher proportions of BAME workers and work will continue on developing projects and programmes to provide support in this area.

Other Options Considered:

15. To not fund the applications recommended in this report:

The awards recognise the key role CVS organisations play in enabling communities to be resilient and the monies provided by this Council are 'pump priming' in the context of enabling the applicants to lever in substantial monies from other organisations, grant-giving charities and national schemes. The impact of COVID19 on the sector has been unprecedented in terms of demand, coupled with loss of income and resources to meet these increased demands. The continued use of this fund to support community initiatives will help to mitigate against some of the challenges faced by the sector in these extraordinary times.

Financial Implications

16. Community Development Grants are funded through a dedicated reserve. The balance held in the Community Development Fund Reserve as at 1 April 2021 was £407,911 which included a £100,000 contribution from General Reserve at Outturn 2020/21. The amount spent in 2021/22 (as at 1 October 2021) was £119,537, which leaves a balance remaining of £288,374.
17. The amounts committed, but not as yet paid, as at 1 October 2021 are £198,284. This leaves a balance of £90,090 if all the committed grants are paid.
18. The total amount of the Community Development Grants proposed in this Cabinet Grants Panel report is £1,600, which leaves a remaining balance of £88,490 if all the committed grants are paid.

Risk Management Implications

19. The main associated risks that may impact upon the successful implementation of the decisions arising from this report would be the inability of the funded organisations to carry out the services, activities or equipment purchase for which funding had been awarded.
20. Where applications reference physical works to properties, applicants will be required to ensure that the project has all the necessary permissions in place (including planning, building regulations, licensing and from landlords) prior to completion.
21. A Contract is signed at the application stage by organisations seeking funding that details the terms and conditions under which the grant is given, including the return of all monies to the Council should the purpose for which the funds are awarded not materialise.
22. All organisations in receipt of grant funds are requested to complete an End of Grant Report at the end of the funding period and required to submit information relating to the grant including purchase invoices, details of the number of residents benefiting from the grant, annual accounts, how the grant was used etc.
23. It is considered that these measures would mitigate the main risks from materialising and indicate a low risk to the successful outcomes arising from this report.

Equality and customer service implications

24. As part of the assessment process all of the organisations applying for funding from the Council have complied with the required conditions of funding and have the requisite policies and procedures in place including any other relevant legislation.

Sustainability Implications

25. The provision of the Community Grants Programme supports the council's community leadership role in the delivery of local and [UK sustainable development goals](#). Specifically, this service contributes towards:



SDG 3: (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) &



SDG 10: (Reduce inequality within and among countries)



SDG 11: (Sustainable Cities and Communities)

Legal Implications

26. The Council is not obliged to provide grant funding, but by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, it is able to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area. This includes the incurring of expenditure, giving financial assistance to any person (or organisation) and entering into arrangements or agreements with any person.

Background Papers

27. Grant applications and associated documentation for the Community & Economic Development grants are held in the Community Services, Policy and Performance Business Unit.