



Report Number

Prosperous Communities

30th January 2018

Subject: Community Grants Programme

Please insert ✓ or N/A to verify this report has been cleared by:-

Finance	Legal	HR	Head of Service	Leaders Panel	CMT

To be removed by Committee Admin immediately prior to agenda despatch

Report to be with Committee Admin no later than 5 working days before Chair's briefing and final report no later than 6 working days before Committee.

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

To establish updated community grants programme.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Members approve Option 1: Continue our Community Grant Programme modified to meet current financial conditions
2. Members recommend to Corporate Policy & Resources Committee for financial approval.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Grant funding agreements approved by Legal Services. All schemes comply with necessary legal regulations and same requirements are placed on projects and organisations funded.

Financial: FIN/135/18

Options 1 and 2 contained within the body of the report would require an increase in this reserve from the General Fund Balance of either £500k or £883k respectively, to spend over 5 years.

In addition to the amounts above, any balance on the Community Grant Scheme earmarked reserve at year end 2017/18 to be carried forward into 2018/19.

Option 3 has no financial implications.

Upon the decision of the Policy and Resources Committee the revenue budget impacts will be built into the Medium Term Financial Plan for approval by Council in March 2018.

Staffing:

Grant scheme management would return to fully in-house with existing staffing of the Enterprising Communities Service and administrative support from Central Support.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Grant funding activity will be delivered in accordance with WLDC equality and diversity policies. Organisations receiving funding will be required to meet the same standards.

Risk Assessment:

None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2015 the Prosperous Communities Committee agreed to the re-launch of the Council's Community Grants Programme. This formed part of the Enterprising Communities Service (formally the Localism Service) and helped to deliver a wide range of benefits for West Lindsey communities.
- 1.2 Over the past 3 years the Community Grants Programme has been delivered with the following schemes:

Councillor Initiative Fund

£3,000 per Councillor for 2016-2019

Each Councillor has a set allocation of funding and is able to make awards to local projects and organisations. A quick delivery time enables funding to be awarded within days/weeks to an organisation.

Small Community Grant

Max Grant: £500

Small grants to help deliver positive volunteer action by supporting small local community projects. This grant could cover everyday project costs but also costs associated with training, developing and supporting volunteers.

Large Community Grant

Max Grant: £8,000

Large grants to support capital projects such as community facilities, sports & recreational projects, improvements to heritage and projects that improve tourism or the environment.

Match Funding Grant

Max Grant: £8,000

Match funding for community projects to help secure external funding already achieved or attract new sources of funding. Able to fund capital and revenue projects.

Community Defibrillator Scheme

(Launched November 2016)

Parish Councils and community organisations are able to apply for a community accessible defibrillator to be installed and available for their local community.

- 1.3 At the beginning of each new financial year a Community Grants Impact Report has been produced. This details the impact of the Community Grants Programme including amounts awarded, geographical spread and match funding secured. The impact reports for 15/16 and 16/17 are included with this report. The impact report for 17/18 will be produced in April 2018.

APPENDIX A – Community Grants Impact Report 2015-2016

APPENDIX B – Community Grants Impact Report 2016-2017

2. Current Community Grant Programme Summary

- 2.1 Whilst the existing funds are still operating it is not possible to give an exact figure of how much budget will remain at the end of March 2018. All schemes have profiled to fully award the existing budget.

The following summary of spend is correct as of 1st January 2018:

Councillor Initiative Fund

Total Awarded: **£103,784**

Total Grants: **248**

Total Match Funding: **£454,676**

Small Community Grant

Total Awarded: **£17,242**

Total Grants: **40**

Total Match Funding: **£29,156**

Large Community Grant

Total Awarded: **£136,108**

Total Grants: **24**

Total Match Funding: **£181,673**

Match Funding Grant

Total Awarded: **£126,851**

Total Grants: **26**

Total Match Funding: **£1,260,079**

Community Defibrillator Scheme

Total Spend: **£69,400***

Total Defibrillators Awarded: **56**

Total Defibrillators Available: **24**

*Our total spend to purchase defibrillators in advance has been £96,400 however this amount is being offset as match funds are received from organisations per defibrillator installation.

Summary

Total Awarded: **£453,385**

Total Grants: **338**

Total Match Funding: **£1,925,584***

*Some match funding may still be awaiting projects to begin or final confirmations of funding being secured from external funders.

- 2.2 The Community Grant Programme budget as of 1st January 2018 was £126,481. With awarded grants awaiting payments, scheduled grant panels and new applications this amount has been profiled to be fully allocated by the end of March 2018. Actual spend may continue into the next financial year whilst awaiting the start of some projects.

- 2.3 Any funds remaining after the end of March 2018 shall be carried forward into any continuing grant programme.
- 2.4 The Councillor Initiative Fund as of 1st January 2018 had a remaining budget of £47,931 in ear-marked reserves and is programmed to run until the end of March 2019.

3. Corporate Plan Themes

- 3.1 Our Community Grants Programme helps support our Corporate Plan Themes. Any options to continue delivery of the funds will continue to support the following themes:
- Theme 1: Open for Business
 - Theme 2: People First
 - Theme 3: Asset Management
 - Theme 5: Partnerships/Devolution
 - Theme 6: Excellent Value for Money Services
- 3.2 Our Community Grants Programme has provided high profile recognition of the support the council can give to community projects. Members are directly involved either making final award decisions or taking part in decision making panels.

4. Issues and challenges

- 4.1 The council continues to face financial pressures in delivering services. The current Community Grants Programme requires significant budget to continue in its current form.
- 4.2 The loss of regional and national community funding sources has continued over the last 3 years. For example all community grant schemes previously available from Lincolnshire County Council have been closed and funders such as WREN now have a drastically reduced grant fund available for projects across the country.
- 4.3 The need for community involvement and/or ownership is increasing as many communities look to provide services and functions that have been reduced or ceased from Public Sector organisations. For example community facilities may now be providing library services and Parish Councils are taking on areas of public land such as parks and footpaths.

As a result local communities can't take new responsibilities on without the correct resources, skills and finance. Many organisations will be seeking grant funding to help support community service provisions and local enhancements.

5. Community Grant Programme Options

5.1 There are 3 options to be considered:

OPTION 1: (PREFERRED OPTION)

Continue our Community Grants Programme modified to meet current financial conditions

Total funding required:

£500,000 over 5 years or £100,000 per year*

**This programme can be established and then operate per year subject to available funding.*

This option would establish an amended Community Grants Programme with fewer schemes that are more aligned to current need and demand. The amended schemes would continue to support local organisations in delivering a wide range of projects for the benefit of local communities.

The programme shall include the Councillor Initiative Fund, Match Funding Grant and Community Defibrillator Scheme. The existing Small and Large Community Grant schemes will not continue.

The amended programme shall launch on 1st April 2018 and run until 31st March 2023. This shall provide 5 years of delivery and become aligned to the council's election timescales.

The programme shall continue the strong emphasis on seeking the best possible leverage and value for grant money spend by achieving match funding. Standard monitoring and evaluation across all funds will continue to evidence the full impact of the programme.

Any remaining budgets at the end of March 2018 shall be carried forward into this new programme.

The following schemes shall be delivered:

- **Councillor Initiative Fund**
Fund already budgeted to run until end of March 2019

Continuation of the existing fund to enable Members to directly support local projects and community organisations. The fund has been very well received for many years allowing Members as locally elected representatives to become engaged and involved in local community projects.

No changes to the criteria of delivering this fund are proposed. Members will be invited to explore options for its continuation during the 2018/19 financial year.

- **Match Funding Grant**
Total fund: £450,000 over 5 years (£90,000 per year)
Grants up to £8,000 (up to 30% of project costs)

Continuation and expansion of the existing Match Funding Grant that will provide support for organisations to deliver a wide range of community projects whilst achieving high levels of match funding in West Lindsey.

The total budget to deliver this grant scheme has been increased from the previous budgeted amount to accommodate an anticipated increase in projects and applications following the end of the Large Community Grant.

Grants can support revenue and capital projects. Conditional awards can be made to enable organisations to secure committed match funding or attract investment from other funding bodies. This scheme shall continue to build on our success of match funding with national funders including Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and WREN.

We will work with other funding organisations to reduce the amount of paperwork applicants need to complete to obtain match funding grants. Match funding grants can also be used to lever and secure loan investment from social investors and other community financial investors.

Criteria:

- Grants paid appropriately according to the amount being awarded with robust project monitoring;
 - Constituted organisations, Parish/Town Councils, charities, social enterprises, schools and faith based organisations are eligible;
 - Strong emphasis on securing additional levered funding and supporting volunteering action;
 - Simple and quick match funding grants to secure external funding from other funding bodies;
 - Will accept successfully completed grant applications submitted to other funding bodies where possible.
 - The maximum grant to any single organisation within 12 months cannot exceed £8,000;
 - The minimum grant that can be awarded is £1,000;
 - Match funding grants will be reviewed on an on-going basis by the Enterprising Communities Team and the Member Community Funding Panel.
- **Community Defibrillator Scheme**
Total fund: £50,000 over 5 years (£10,000 per year)

Continuation of the existing Community Defibrillator Scheme awarding and installing defibrillators in local communities. As of January 2018 the current stock level of defibrillators means we expect to have sufficient supply for 2018. The fund budget will be available to purchase additional

defibrillators within the 5 year period if the existing supply is fully awarded and to support maintenance grants.

Criteria:

- Constituted organisations, Parish/Town Councils, charities, social enterprises, schools and faith based organisations are eligible;
- Organisations must match fund £400 towards any new defibrillator awarded;
- All applications will be reviewed on an on-going basis by the Enterprising Communities Team.

Advantages to this option:

1. Continue to support a wide range of community action
2. Develop stronger links between local communities, the council and Members
3. Support the delivery of Corporate Plan priorities
4. Provide an updated community grant programme more in-line with the council's financial position
5. Bring all grant schemes onto the same operating timeline
6. Removes external management and delivery costs
7. Secure more external funding into the district
8. Support more volunteer action to take place
9. Increase participation of residents and members in community funding and improvements

Disadvantages to this option:

1. Funds may appear less transparent not delivered by external organisations
2. Financial commitment required to deliver the programme

**5.2 OPTION 2:
Continue our Community Grants Programme in current format**

**Total funding required:
£883,333 over 5 years or £176,666 per year***

**This programme can be established and then operate per year subject to available funding.*

This option would continue to deliver our Community Grants Programme in the current format but align to the council's election timescales. In addition to the schemes detailed in OPTION 1 the programme would continue to feature the Small and Large Community Grants.

To enable delivery of the programme in its current format additional financial resources above what is required for OPTION 1 would need to be allocated.

The following schemes would be delivered with fund allocations able to be re-distributed between funds to respond to changing need and demand:

- **Councillor Initiative Fund**
Fund already budgeted to run until end of March 2019

- **Match Funding Grant**
Total fund: £333,333 over 5 years (£66,666 per year)
Grants up to £8,000 (up to 30% of project costs)

- **Small Community Grant**
Total fund: £200,000 over 5 years (£40,000 per year) *
Grants up to £500 (up to 80% of project costs)

- **Large Community Grant**
Total fund: £300,000 over 5 years (£60,000 per year) *
Grants up to £8,000 (up to 80% of project costs)

* This total fund includes an amount to cover the external grant fund management. Over 5 years this would be an estimated £122,578 (£24,515 per year) based on current external management contract costs.

- **Community Defibrillator Scheme**
Total fund: £50,000 over 5 years (£10,000 per year)

All the above funding allocation (except for the Councillor Initiative Fund) are based on previous allocations and can be amended during the delivery of the programme to re-distribute funds from one scheme to another in order to meet need and demand.

Advantages to this option:

1. Continue to support a wide range of community action
2. Develop stronger links between local communities, the council and Members
3. Support the delivery of Corporate Plan priorities
4. Secure more external funding into the district
5. Support more volunteer action to take place
6. Increase participation of residents and members in community funding and improvements

Disadvantages to this option:

1. Large financial commitment required to deliver the programme
2. On-going external management costs or need to increase staffing if managed internally

5.3 OPTION 3: Allow Community Grant Programme to close

This option would end all existing community grant schemes. Any funds remaining would then be available to re-distribute within WLDC. No community funding would then be delivered.

Any schemes currently being delivered would continue until agreed end dates. The Councillor Initiative Fund would continue until end of March 2019. All other schemes would close at the end of March 2018.

Advantages to this option:

1. No management and delivery costs
2. No officer time required to manage funds
3. Remaining funds from existing grant schemes would be returned to WLDC

Disadvantages to this option:

1. Loss of match funding into West Lindsey
2. No financial investment in supporting community action and improvement
3. Would end positive work and outcomes achieved by existing grant funds
4. No funding for community projects and enterprises from WLDC in difficult financial times
5. Negative public reaction to withdrawing community funding support
6. Community organisations and businesses may be put at risk without funding
7. No community activity or volunteering would be financially supported
8. No volunteer hours supported by WLDC funding

6. Recommendations

- 6.1** Members approve Option 1: Continue our Community Grant Programme modified to meet current financial conditions
- 6.2** Members recommend to Corporate Policy & Resources Committee for financial approval.