

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC21/077

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	24 th February 2022
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Grants and Wards Initiatives Policies
Wards Affected:-	ALL

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for grants and ward initiatives polices, and onward approval by Council.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the policies and rules below, with a view to these being submitted to Council for approval at its next meeting, in particular:-

- The policy on small grants (Appendix One) and in 3.3.2- 3.3.4 below.
- The policy on ward initiatives fund (Appendix Two)
- The procedure rules on the ward initiatives fund (Appendix Three)

3. Information

3.1.1. The Council's budget and plans for 2022/23 includes a number of headings which anticipate investment in the local community through grant making, the provision of infrastructure or services, and in support of community resilience. Some of these budget headings are explicitly called grant schemes and some may involve an element of grant making in how they are realised. The principal headings are

Heading	Amount	Characteristics
Small Grants	£15,000	Grant scheme to support voluntary and community sector initiatives, projects and service improvement

Members Initiatives Fund	£10,000	Grant scheme for members to support small scale projects, communications or facilities in their ward
Town Lottery Fund	Currently unknown	Grant scheme to support local good causes, with priorities identified in advance by Council
Community Infrastructure Fund	£20,000	Monies to pay for new facilities across town, which will rely in part on ideas from other organisations or local groups
Community Resilience Fund	£7400	Money to address health, welfare, community safety and sustainable outcomes potentially in conjunction with the Levelling Up agenda. This may also rely in part on ideas from other organisations or local groups
Biodiversity and tree planting	£3000	Although primarily for the Council to spend on its own projects, this might also be available to fund the work of other organisations

3.2. This report addresses the first two lines – small grants and a ward initiatives fund, - £15,000 and £10,000 respectively, and seeks to apply a policy framework to both strands. Nevertheless, there are potential overlaps with the other headings in the list above, and members may wish to consider how broad or narrow the scope of these two funds are, compared to those other headings. By the time this committee meets, council will also have come to a view about the use of monies raised by the Town Lottery.

3.3. SMALL GRANTS

3.3.1. The grants budget will be available for local groups to bid into, to support a project or initiative or to expand an existing service. It is not intended to fund infrastructure improvements, although there may be occasions where facilities or equipment is funded through it. The grant policy should ideally not overlap with the member's initiative fund or with NNC's small grants policy. .

3.3.2. To help reduce these particular overlaps, it is proposed that grants should be within the range of £500 to £5000, although most will be at the lower end of this spectrum. The members initiative fund has an upper limit of £500 and whilst the NNC small grants policy has no floor, it has a ceiling of £25,000 and most applications can be expected to be – from 2022/23 onwards – of a greater scale than £5000. (although this year, NNC has only made grants under £5000). An alternative ceiling could be £2500 but this might be too restrictive, and limit what could be supported. Consultees who commented supported a higher ceiling.

3.3.3. A further area of overlap is with the grants scheme supported by the Town Lottery proceeds and to avoid confusion on this score, it is suggested that complementary

priorities are agreed for both the Town Lottery and this grants funding stream. However, to avoid making life too complicated for applicants, the Council reserves the right to novate grant applications between the two streams depending on their suitability.

- 3.3.4. Although Council will approve this policy, it is proposed that this Committee will determine individual grants. To avoid a first come, first served outcome, it is suggested that there shall be two or three funding rounds, for example
- April to end of June
 - July to end of September
 - October to end of December

The need for a third round might be determined by the number of approved grants in the two previous rounds.

- 3.3.5. Realistically, with a provision of £15000, it is unlikely that more than 6-10 grants will be made each year and with the existence of the members' initiative fund to meet most very small requests, then this grants fund can be devoted to more meatier applications.
- 3.3.6. A draft policy is included at Appendix One for members' views.

3.4. WARD INITIATIVES FUND

- 3.4.1. There is £10,000 within the overall budget to provide members with resources to allocate to groups or projects within their ward, or which benefit the whole town, or groups of wards. This can be used in one of three ways:-

1. Each member has £500 to use and has to use that amount each year
2. There is a single pot of £10,000 that members can bid into
3. Members are provided with a fund of £500 each year, and if they cannot use it by a set date (say end of October), then any under-spending is available for other members to bid into.

- 3.4.2. The negative experience of such funding streams in the past has been twofold
- Some members struggle to spend the money because their ward has fewer needs or the demographic is different (fewer active groups asking for help) but other members could spend the money several times over
 - The unspent money could stay unused for some time (years) because there was no hard and fast deadline for it being spent, whilst needs elsewhere went unmet.

Options 2 and 3 would help address the first of these problems and a clear deadline on when the money has to be spent each year would help address the second of these problems. The argument against option 2 is that the whole fund could easily be monopolised by a small number of members on a first come basis and the argument against option 3 is that needs or requests which emerge later in the year would go unmet for 5 months or so.

- 3.4.3. So, the scheme set out below and in Appendix Two currently reflects an adaptation of the scheme operated by Kettering Borough Council (£500 per member/year) but could be modified by adopting either of the other two options.
- 3.3.2 Members may pool their contribution, either within a ward, or between wards. A pro forma to capture the requests and provide an appropriate audit trail would need to be produced.
- 3.3.3 The old KBC rules needed some tweaking as there was a reference to town and parish councils in the second column – this section has been replaced with a point that the fund cannot be used to supplement a project funded by the Town Council.
- 3.3.4. Members would need to use their money within the year (or by a set date) but could transfer it to another member in their ward to use if they cannot. There will be no virement between one year and another. In the year immediately before a whole Council election, (the next one being 24/25) all the monies will have to be spent or abandoned by 1st January. No new fund can be drawn down in the relevant financial year until after whole Council elections have taken place. Where there is a bye-election, the monies cannot be used between the date of resignation of a member and the date of any election, in any way which affects the ward where the bye-election takes place. Unspent monies left by a departing member can be inherited by their successor. The KBC procedure rules have been adapted and are included as Appendix Three.

4. Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1. The consultation carried out on the budget elicited the following responses;-

I think the criteria for the grants programme should be as broad as possible whilst being mindful of quality controls and checks to prevent fraudulent applications. It would be good to see included opportunities for pieces of work to be delivered in order to build up evidence of need, thus giving the possibility of longer term sustainability if other funds were attracted on the back of it. The reporting requirement should be proportionate to the amount of grant awarded.

I think that grants are too small and too short term to have any real impact on the legacy. What sort of town do we want? Are we aiming for another Corby, or a Market Harborough?

See above about understanding the “third sector” in Kettering. There should be some flexibility if a really beneficial scheme comes along

If grants are £2500 they need to have minimum admin and need to be really easy especially for new groups to apply for (even unconstituted but with easy measures in place to ensure spent well and impact promoted). Could there be a young persons grant fund or scheme such as seed funding for teens to buy stock/materials for teenage markets to encourage local entrepreneurs. The markets are a great way for teens to have a chance of trying a business idea. I used to run the Kettering town centre youth partnership and this was an idea from that. So these grants need to be available for age 12+.

The grants need to focus on supporting people to put creative ideas into practice which are engaging, innovative and help bring people together in neighbourhoods or venues such as the town centre or local parks. Ideally the council would also be involved in delivering an aspect too eg markets so it is about collaborations rather than just handouts

£5k is a more realistic ceiling figure, however this is linked to the total level of funds available.

There may be opportunities here to work in partnership with neighbouring town councils to increase the pot available per application where priorities align.

4.2. The views of the Voluntary Sector Network have also been sought on the Small Grants policy prior to this meeting and their ideas and thoughts incorporated where possible.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

5.1. A total of £25000 exists to support both funds.

5.2. Certain legal restrictions will apply to the use of the members' initiatives fund, around election law primarily, and these are reflected in the draft rules.

5.3. Administering both funding streams can be accommodated within the clerk's time.

6. Policy Implications

6.1. The opportunity exists to use the small grants fund to achieve the council's wider objectives as set out in the corporate plan and the draft policy reflects some of those objectives.

6.2. It is understood that NNC is also introducing a member empowerment scheme for 22/23.

Background Papers

NNC small grants policy

Consultation responses on budget and corporate plan

Former KBC member initiatives fund policy and rules

APPENDIX ONE

FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ITEM FC21/077 24TH FEBRUARY 2022

SMALL GRANTS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to govern the making of grants to local groups and organisations for the benefit of the community of Kettering Town.
- 1.2. The Council is committed to distributing available funding fairly, efficiently and effectively. This policy outlines the Council's approach to Small Grant making to support community activities. These awards can be made to Community and Voluntary Organisations, Registered Charities, Charitable Incorporated Organisations, (CIOs) and to other bodies or individuals.
- 1.3. Funding awards are made at the discretion of the Council and will be dependent on the availability of the level of funding which is determined in the annual budget. Activities funded must be consistent with the strategic aims, objectives and priorities of the Council. All funding applications will be determined on their objective merits. No organisation is entitled to funding because it may have been granted funding in the past or for any other reason. The Council must ensure proper, prudent and effective use of public money; and eligibility for grants is aligned with specified criteria. This allows the Council to focus on supporting organisations to achieve their best and to meet clearly identified needs.
- 1.4. The Council will aim to keep the process straightforward, transparent and accessible.

2. ALIGNMENT WITH TOWN COUNCIL POLICIES

- 2.1. The Council's corporate plan sets out its objectives and policies. This grants policy has therefore identified the following categories of spending that the Council wishes to support, and against which it will invite bids from groups or, in rare cases, individuals.

Economic development – supporting sustainable growth; support for the town centre through encouraging and delivering events and markets, or making the town centre safe, attractive, interesting and varied.

Health and Community- measures to improve physical and mental health wellbeing, particularly in the light of the impacts of covid 19.

Armed Forces – initiatives which support the objectives of the Armed Forces Covenant

Sustainability – measures which encourage and supporting sustainable habits and opportunities including widening the scope and opportunities for recycling, and bio-diversity, optimising sustainable methods of travel, and which protect, restore and enhance our local biodiversity

Community resilience – measures which support volunteering, community involvement, neighbourhood and community led activities; enable voluntary youth action and the

development of services for young people; prevent homelessness, improve social mobility , tackle inequality; and promote social inclusion

Sporting or artistic excellence – supporting individuals whose sporting or artistic prowess can be fostered through financial support for training, equipment, travel or performances. Applicants will need to be supported by a sporting or artistic organisation with whom they are affiliated.

Twinning activities which promote international understanding, provide cultural learning opportunities and which engage the wider community including young people and those with limited life experience.

2.2. Applications should demonstrate that funding will be used to support these priorities.

2.3. We invite applications which. • target resources to meet identified needs; • maximise leverage (for example match funding); • maximise sustainability (economic, environmental and social); • achieve greater accountability and openness

3. WHO CAN APPLY

3.1. Charities, CIOs, community and voluntary groups, clubs, individuals, and not for profit organisations eligible to apply for funding. School Parent Teacher Associations, Friends of groups, religious bodies and health charities can apply for funding which evidence programmes or projects that benefit the wider community. Individuals can only be supported where they can demonstrate sporting or artistic benefit.

3.2. Applications will not be accepted from private businesses, for-profit organisations where funding would contravene local government Subsidy Control or any other legislation, Statutory bodies and Religious bodies where the money will be used primarily for religious purposes or religious buildings or facilities.

3.3. Advice on completing the application forms will be available from the Voluntary Sector Network. Forms will be available through the Council's website or on request from the clerk. The Council will endeavour to advertise the availability of grants as widely as possible, including through the local Voluntary Sector Network.

3.4. Subsequent applications from the same organisation will not be entertained until the previous ones have been determined.

4. WHAT WILL BE FUNDED

4.1. The following costs are allowable

- Core running costs including employee costs
- Programme or activity costs which are directly relevant to the application;
- Travel and transport costs associated with events in Kettering
- Hire or purchase of equipment for meeting project needs, including sports equipment;
- Venue hire (excluding hire of group's own premises) relating to the application;
- Technical assistance;

- Events within Kettering
- Publicity, marketing;
- Volunteer expenses.

4.2. The following costs are not allowable:-

- Projects or activities primarily delivered outside the Council's area
- Activities which are discriminatory, political, or religious
- Where there is statutory funding provision available
- Capital costs
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g. VAT
- Costs towards banking charges or repayment of debt
- Retrospective costs e.g. activities completed
- Gifts and prizes
- Alcohol
- Works to facilities that are/should be subject to an insurance claim

5. DECISION MAKING AND GRANTS

5.1. This policy will be approved and amended from time to time by full Council. Decisions to make grants are delegated to the Finance and Governance Committee, which will meet in public.

5.2. Grant rounds will be open three times a year, with closing dates of 30th June, 30th September and 31st December. The Committee will meet within 6 weeks of a closing date to make decisions. The availability of a third bidding round will depend on the availability of funds after the first two rounds.

5.3. The Committee will be provided with a report summarising each eligible bid and a copy of the application form.

5.4. Grant payment will usually be made by bank transfer within one week of the decision being communicated to the applicant.

5.5. Organisations in receipt of funding are required to comply with terms and conditions set out in any offer letter. They will be asked to report in writing on how the grant has been used within six months of the spending having been completed, providing whatever data has been collected about the impact of the spending or reporting against any criteria agreed at the point of a grant being awarded.

5.6. The Council gives no undertaking that grant funding under this scheme will be available in future financial years.

5.7. If an application is unsuccessful there is no right of appeal

6. DATA PROTECTION

- 6.1. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is a process to help identify and minimise the data protection risks of a project. The council is required to undertake a DPIA for processing that is likely to result in a high risk to individuals.

- 6.2. The council has considered the data protection implications of processing community grants. This processing is compliant with the provisions in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). The council has considered the data protection implications of processing. Further details of how personal data is processed and kept securely can be found in the Privacy Notice on the council's website.

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF THE WARD INITIATIVES FUND

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Ward Initiative Fund of £500 per member per annum of the four year term, exists to enhance the capacity of members to undertake their community representation role.
- 1.2 These guidelines set out the prohibitions on the use of the fund, but does not cover all the authorised uses to which the fund may be put. Members can be innovative in producing proposals for use of the fund and will share their experiences of the outcomes of any new uses.
- 1.3 Members cannot access the fund directly. All payments will be made by the clerk and are subject to the usual internal controls on expenditure and the prohibitions listed below.
- 1.4 Members should not raise unrealistic expectations to potential beneficiaries.
- 1.5 Members are advised not to incur expenditure themselves and then seek to recover their costs from the fund without first being assured that such costs are refundable.
- 1.6 Where possible, Members should provide invoices, quotations or receipts to accompany any request.
- 1.7 Before payments from the fund may be authorised, members are required to sign an undertaking not to use it for improper purposes.

2. PROHIBITIONS ON THE USE OF THE FUND

- 2.1 The fund may not be used for any purpose for which the Town Council could not itself incur expenditure.
- 2.2 This prohibition includes:
 - expenditure which would be in breach of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity
 - expenditure which would be in breach of any statutory provision relating to elections and referendums
 - expenditure which would be contrary to the Council's commitments to local people, as expressed in the Corporate Plan

2.3 Examples of prohibited expenditure include:

- anything which is, or is liable to misrepresentation as being, party political. Anything published with financial support from the fund may not include reference to political affiliations, use political slogans, expressly advocate policies as being of a particular political party or directly attack policies and opinions of other parties, groups or individuals
- no publications, projects or events shall be funded which are issued or held during the period preceding an ordinary Town Council election and the election itself, nor will support be given during such period in relation to a ward in which a by-election is to be held. For other local and national elections, the prohibition relates to any event, project or publication which gives, or could be misrepresented as giving, any publicity whatsoever to a candidate at the election.
- no publications, projects or events shall be funded which appear designed to influence local people in deciding whether or not to sign a petition or vote in a referendum.
- any request which would directly benefit a sole individual
- any request for monies to be spent on consumables or trips
- any request that could be considered as 'Treating' under election law.
- any request where the beneficiary has received or is set to receive funding from North Northamptonshire Council or the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.
- The Ward Initiative Fund will not substitute itself as a provider / funder of services when another public provider cuts such a service.

2.4 Determinations to withhold funding will be made by the Clerk and shall be in writing detailing the basis of the determination.

3. AUTHORISED USES OF THE FUND

3.1 Subject to the prohibitions noted in Section 2 the fund may be used for any purpose which in the opinion of the member concerned will enhance their community representation role. Such purposes will include:

- providing facilities or improving access to services for residents in their ward

- providing information to constituents, whether in the whole ward or a part thereof and whether about the Council or about any other matter affecting the economic, social or environmental well-being of the ward or that part of the ward
- seeking the views of constituents, whether in the whole ward or a part thereof and whether about the Council or about any other matter affecting the economic, social or environmental well-being of the ward or that part of the ward
- any other purpose which in the opinion of the member will enhance the economic, social and environmental well-being of their ward or part thereof.

3.2 Individual ward members may pool their fund allocations together if they feel that a scheme would benefit residents of more than one ward. One or more ward members can also join with one or more ward councillors from another ward or wards to fund a project, provided it can be shown that the project benefits residents from both or all wards concerned. Individual members are responsible for ensuring funds are distributed in an equitable manner.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND

4.1 The clerk shall have responsibility for administering the fund.

4.2 All requests must be submitted to the clerk to be assessed and authorised.

4.3 The annual allowance will be set by Council each year.

4.4 Any monies not spent as at 31st March each year, cannot be rolled over into the following financial year. Balances left in the fund and not spent before the deadlines imposed, are considered lost and will be absorbed within the Council's general balances

4.5 In the financial year immediately preceding a whole Council election, the monies must be used by the 1st January and no new allocation in the next financial year can be used before the date of the election..

4.6 Where a member resigns or is disqualified, any unspent monies will be inherited by their successor, subject to the restrictions above.

4.7 Reports will be compiled and published from time to time.

5. UNDERTAKING

I declare that I shall follow these guidelines in my use of the Fund and shall not use it for any purpose contrary to law or otherwise incompatible with my role as a member of Kettering Borough Council.

Signed by

Name

Dated