



REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC22/065

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	25 th January 2023
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Review of Grants Policies for 2023-24
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To review the grants policy ahead of advertising access to it in 2023-4

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to

- Consider if it wishes to make any changes to the criteria for the grants fund
- Rebrand the small grants fund as *support for the voluntary and community sector*
- Agree a new limit of £2500 on any award for voluntary and community sector grants or from the community resilience fund.
- Consider if applications to access both the voluntary and community sector grants fund and the community resilience fund be advertised simultaneously and applications allocated between the two, as deemed appropriate, before being submitted to members for consideration.

3. Information

3.1. The Council had three funds providing grants in 2022-3

- Ward initiatives fund £10,000 – dealt with separately
- Grants to support the voluntary sector £15,000
- Community resilience fund £ 7,400

This report covers the second and third funds.

3.2. In 2022-23, all of the voluntary sector grants were spent in the first round. A general invitation was sent to potential applicants, and the grants round given general publicity. Four applicants shared the £15,000 and five more applications arrived subsequently, two of which were partly successful through the community resilience

fund. Two of the other three applications were routed through the community resilience fund, but were not awarded anything.

3.3. In the case of the community resilience fund, this has not been subject to a single bidding round. It was initially intended to support the levelling up agenda which, to date, has largely been manifested in work within the Avondale Grange area. Therefore the fund has been used to commission activity as much as support applications for grant. To date, three grants totalling £3350 have been awarded, together with an allocation of £1000 to be drawn down, if needed, for Avondale Grange. A further unspecified allocation has been made of between £500 and £1000 but not yet been agreed with the provider. There is about £2000 uncommitted.

3.4. For 2023-4 members' views are sought on

- Reviewing the criteria by which grant applications are tested
- Agreeing the headings under which grants may be paid
- Changing the maximum amount for any single grant
- More closely integrating the two funds

VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS

3.5. The awards in 2022 were for

- | | |
|---|-------|
| - Homestart – core funding | £5000 |
| - KCU – furniture and food delivery service | £4000 |
| - Civic Society – local history magazine for children | £5000 |
| - Friends of Rockingham Rd park – various | £1000 |

3.6. **Criteria** The current grants policy for small grants is set out in Appendix One below – the key elements are highlighted for convenience. It is not proposed that any changes are made to the policy (except to change its name from small grants to grants to support the voluntary sector) but members' views on the policy are invited nevertheless.

3.7. **Grant headings** for small grants are set out in 2.1 of Appendix One. They are fairly broad and no applications have been received for several of the categories.

3.8. **Maximum amount per grant award.** The existing maximum grant is £5000, and most applicants applied for the maximum available, with the result that relatively small numbers of organisations can be helped. It is proposed that the limit be reduced to either £3000 or £2500. NNC small grants have two ranges – up to £2500 and between £2500 to £5000.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND

3.9. The awards to date have been for

- | | |
|---|-------|
| - Citizens Advice Bureau volunteer recruitment and training | £1500 |
| - St Michaels' church – "Teas Up" Monday day facilities | £ 850 |
| - Accommodation Concern – advise outreach sessions | £1000 |
| - Avondale Grange – supplement to community voting fund | £1000 |
| - First Responders – health and safety session for parents | TBA |

3.10. The criteria for the community resilience fund is shown in Appendix Two below. It is already the case that applications which might not necessarily fit the first fund can be referred into the second as a matter of course. To explicitly advertise both funds together as a grant opportunity however runs the risk that applications for grant could consume all the available monies and leave nothing with which the Council can commission work it felt needed doing – it would turn the resilience fund into a grants fund, which was not the original intention. .

4. Consultation and Engagement

The consultation on the budget included 26 responses on grants. Most people felt that the grants fund was sufficient, but had views on priorities for it. Suggested priorities included

- Services benefiting children and young people
- Arts and nurturing local talent
- Walking and cycling
- Supporting vulnerable people and providing warm spaces, supporting mental health outcomes, preventing homelessness,

One person suggested a large increase in the grants pot and asking the wider community what their priorities would be. Several advocated clearer accountability for the groups receiving money for how they used it.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

In 2023/24 there is £27500 available to grant aid local organisations in providing services of benefit to the community. Subject to agreement at this meeting, the availability of funds would be advertised from early March onwards.

6. Policy Implications

The Corporate Plan states

1. The Council will support measures to improve physical and mental health wellbeing, particularly in the light of the impacts of covid 19, through its own services and in partnership with others.
2. The Council will support measures to improve public safety, road safety, and the safety of the night time economy in Kettering.
3. The Council will, within its own remit, strive to protect, restore and enhance our local biodiversity and the natural world that surrounds us and of which we are all a part and will strive to take the most sustainable approach to the design and delivery of its own services
4. The Council will support the development of walking and cycling infrastructure and the growth of public transport.

Background Papers

Expenditure records

Policies and grants criteria

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 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 local organisations.

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 support 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 measures which improve sporting or artistic achievement for local people.

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 one or more of 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, and not for profit organisations are 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.

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 or political parties, or from 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

4.3. This grants fund expects to make payments of between £500 and £5000 only.

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 31st May , 30th September and 31st January . The Committee will meet within 6 weeks of a closing date to make decisions, and within four weeks of the January deadline. The availability of the third bidding round will depend on the availability of funds after the first two rounds. Money to support a third bidding round may also come from any unspent monies allocated to the members' ward initiative fund.

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.

APPENDIX TWO - COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND CRITERIA

Adopted 20th July 2022

This fund is intended to enable the Council to support or initiate projects which

- Supported the Levelling up agenda
- Improved access to health and wellbeing projects
- Tackled community safety problems
- Helped vulnerable groups with social interaction and neighbour support
- Enabled the community to embrace more sustainable habits

The fund is not primarily a grants fund – it is held as a resource, to respond to approaches made to the Town Council by groups or other agencies looking for support and that each proposal is brought to this committee for approval.

The money can be used to

- Help social support networks be developed or sustained, where delivered through community groups, voluntary organisations, religious institutions or charities
- Help people take more exercise and eat more healthily – especially children and older people
- Help people improve their mental health and general wellbeing through activities and social networks.
- Support networks, like neighbourhood watch schemes, which improve the ability of neighbourhoods to resist crime
- Supports measures which help people develop habits which consume fewer natural resources and saves them money
- Communicate and publicise services listed above.

The fund will not be available for capital expenditure (e.g to buy single items costing more than £250)

Funding in any one year for any project does not imply that it will be repeated in subsequent years. -
