

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Director of Strategic Services

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Community and Voluntary Grants 2020-21

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed allocation of grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2020-21. In order to protect and maintain services to some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents, we are proposing to transfer £50,495 from the community grants budget to support the voluntary grants scheme in 2020-21.

Recommendation to Executive

That the Executive approves:

- (1) the allocation of community grants for 2020-21 as set out in Appendix 1 to this report;
- (2) the transfer of £50,495 from the community grants budget to the budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2020-21; and
- (3) the allocation of grant funding to voluntary organisations for 2020-21 as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

Reason(s) for Recommendation:

To enable the grants process for 2020-21 to be implemented.

Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No

1. Purpose of Report

The report asks the Executive to approve grants to community and voluntary organisations for 2020-21 as proposed by the Council's Grants Panel.

2. Strategic Priorities

Voluntary and community organisations deliver a wide range of services within the borough, including to some of our most vulnerable residents. As such, the

grants proposed within this report will contribute to the delivery of the following strategic priorities:

- a) supporting older, more vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community; and
- b) enhancing sporting, cultural, community and recreational facilities.

3. Background

Community Grants

- 3.1 Charitable, social enterprise, community and voluntary organisations are eligible to apply to this grant scheme. The scheme does not provide year-on-year funding for the same project and support is directed towards projects that will become self-sustaining in future. The budget for 2020-21 is £132,360.
- 3.2 The maximum grant available under the scheme is the lower of £15,000 or 50% of the cost of the project. Applications were assessed and scored by the Grants Panel (comprising Councillors Julia McShane, Graham Eyre, Angela Goodwin and John Redpath) on 26 November 2019 against the following criteria:
 - support for the Council's corporate priorities;
 - extra facilities, equipment, services or activities to be provided that do not already exist;
 - local need and community benefit; and
 - financial position and viability and sustainability of the project.
- 3.3 Following discussion, the Grants Panel decided to award grants to organisations scoring 10 points or more out of a possible 20. The grants recommended for funding in 2020-21 are set out in Appendix 1 to this report. The total proposed allocation is £81,865 and the Panel recommended that the remaining £50,495 be transferred to the voluntary grants budget for 2020-21 to maintain vital services for some of our most vulnerable residents.

Grants to Voluntary Organisations

- 3.4 The Voluntary Grants Panel was previously a partnership between Surrey County Council and us. However, since 2018-19, funding is now provided only by this Council. Grants are awarded to voluntary organisations for projects that:
 - support older people in our community
 - support vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community
 - protect or enhance our environment
 - enhance our sporting, cultural and recreational facilities

- deliver health and wellbeing improvement for our residents
 - prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough
 - provide skills, training and work opportunities for residents
 - deliver initiatives to address issues of rural deprivation
- 3.5 The provisional budget for voluntary grants for 2020-21 is £178,870. We are also recommending that unallocated community grants funding is transferred to the voluntary grants budget which, if agreed, would provide a total pot of £229,365 for 2020-21.
- 3.6 Applications were assessed and scored by the Grants Panel on 20 November 2019 against the following criteria:
- evidence of need for project or service;
 - evidence of partnership working (particularly with other voluntary organisations);
 - evidence of measures taken to improve cost-effectiveness, reduce operating costs or increase income; and
 - extent to which the project supports the Council's corporate priorities.
- 3.7 The Panel decided to award grants to organisations scoring 12 points or more out of a possible 25. The grants recommended for funding in 2020-21 are set out in Appendix 2 to this report. The total proposed allocation is £221,500.
- 3.8 Applicants for voluntary (and community) grants have been informed of their provisional allocations and advised that these are subject to approval by the Executive.

4. Consultation

All applications for community and voluntary grants have been considered by the Council's Grants Panel.

5. Key Risks

We believe that the grants recommended in this report align our grant support for voluntary and community organisations with our corporate priorities, particularly in terms of the focus on the disadvantaged and vulnerable. However, we should be mindful that, as the largest funder of services in some cases, we are likely to be seen as being responsible and accountable for their provision and continuation.

6. Financial Implications

The proposed allocations set out in this report are based on the funding for community and voluntary grants included within the Council's budget for 2020-21. Within this overall grant pot, we are proposing the virement of £50,495 from the community grants budget to the budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2020-21.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 We have the power to give grants to voluntary and community organisations under the general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 7.2 Community and voluntary organisations awarded grants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with us before any payment is made. The agreement will set out the outcomes to be achieved using the funding and these will be monitored to ensure that they are delivered.

8. Human Resource Implications

There are no human resources implications arising from the report.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 When deciding whether to recommend a grant for approval, we must have due regard to the public sector equality duty by consciously thinking about the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

(Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.)

- 9.2 We need to carefully consider proposals that would reduce funding to groups that have previously received financial support on a regular basis. In this case though, voluntary and community grants only provide funding for one year and there is no commitment to ongoing support. This is made clear to applicants so there is no legitimate expectation that funding will continue.

10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

There are no significant implications for climate change or sustainability arising from the proposals in the report.

11. Summary of Options

Grants to voluntary and community organisations are made on an entirely discretionary basis. Grant recipients are made aware that funding is provided for one year only and that there is no commitment to further support. On that basis, it is for the Council to choose the overall level of grant funding to make available. Within that framework, individual grants are recommended based on the outcome of a consistent assessment and scoring process undertaken by the Grants Panel.

12. Conclusion

The report proposes that grants are awarded to community and voluntary organisations in 2020-21 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report. It recommends that £50,495 be vired from the community grants budget to the budget for grants to voluntary organisations to accommodate this.

13. Background Papers

Community Grants Scheme Application Forms 2020-21
Voluntary Grants Application Forms 2020-21
Community Grants Scoring Matrix
Voluntary Grants Scoring Matrix

14. Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Community Grants Scheme Allocations 2020-21
Appendix 2: Proposed Voluntary Grants Scheme Allocations 2020-21