

# GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

1 OCTOBER 2021 (VERSION 4)

## **Introduction – Grants to Voluntary Organisations**

As part of a review of grants, in January 2020, the Executive discontinued the Voluntary Grants Scheme (£179,000 per annum) and Community Grants Scheme (£168,000 per annum) in their existing forms. Instead, it was agreed that annual grants to organisations delivering against our strategic priorities (homelessness, mental health services, vulnerable families and services for the elderly) would be replaced by rolling agreements (totalling £190,000) to provide greater certainty over future funding. Organisations benefitting from that change are shown in Appendix 1.

At that time, the Executive also agreed to establish a new smaller Aspire Grants Scheme (£30,000 per annum) to support small scale local community projects and also to retain a reduced Voluntary Grants Scheme (£50,000 per annum) to provide some funding for other organisations delivering services for our priority groups. The establishment of a new crowdfunding platform for a two year trial period with an annual budget of £80,000 funded through the New Homes Bonus was also approved. The overall financial implications of these changes are shown in Appendix 2.

As background, it should be noted that the original Voluntary Grants Scheme was established as a tri-partite funding body along with Surrey County Council (SCC) and the NHS. Both SCC and NHS withdrew funding in recent years leaving the Borough Council as the only contributor. Whilst the scheme continues to provide support to organisations working with vulnerable residents, as a legacy of its former composition, grant funding does not necessarily closely support our own priorities or core client groups. Many grants are more health service focussed. Grants awarded in the current year are shown in Appendix 3.

With priority groups and services now being supported through funding agreements, the proposed establishment of a new crowdfunding platform to support voluntary and community organisations in Autumn 2021 and our increased financial challenges, this mandate considers options for future grant funding.

# GRANTS TO VOLUNARY ORGANISATIONS - STRATEGY

## 1. Why should a programme/project be started now?

We provide extensive support to voluntary organisations through funding agreements and grant schemes. We also provide funding through Guildford Philanthropy (with an annual budget of £35,000 to match-fund private donations) and manage the Guildford Community Lottery as a vehicle for local organisations to raise funds. We are planning to launch a new Guildford Crowdfunding Platform in Autumn 2021 (with a two year budget of £160,000) to provide an additional source of funding for community projects and activities. Given the financial challenges facing the Council and that this is a discretionary area of spend, a decision is required on future financial support for grants to external organisations as part of our savings strategy.

## 2. What is the good idea or problem to be solved?

In the context of the challenging financial position facing the Council, its corporate priorities and the outcomes of the consultation with residents on future spending priorities, to review the extent and focus of future funding for voluntary and community organisations.

## 3. What is the purpose of the project and what outputs and outcomes will it deliver?

Depending on the preferred option, the decision will deliver financial savings to the Council and/or confirm the priorities for future funding of community and voluntary organisations.

## 4. What priority, corporate objective or strategy is fulfilled by this project?

A reduction in funding would contribute to savings required as part of our Savings Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan and 2022/23 budget. However, any decision needs to be taken in the context that tackling inequality and working with our communities to support our elderly and most vulnerable residents are high corporate priorities.

# GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - OPTIONS

## 5. What are the strategic options available to GBC to deliver a solution?

### a) **Do Nothing**

Retain the existing Voluntary Grants Scheme (£50,000 per annum) and Aspire Community Grants Scheme (£30,000).

### b) **Discontinue the Voluntary Grants Scheme**

Given that we have entered into funding agreements with voluntary organisations delivery our priority services (homelessness, mental health services, support for vulnerable families and services for the elderly), discontinue the Voluntary Grants Scheme to deliver an annual saving of £50,000 per annum. Maximum grants under this scheme are £5,000 and the focus is on organisations providing support to elderly, vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.

### c) **Discontinue the Aspire Community Grants Scheme**

Discontinue the Aspire Community Grants Scheme to deliver an annual saving of £30,000 per annum. Maximum grants under this scheme are £1,000 and these are focused on small community projects that bring health and wellbeing benefits to residents. These are often the type of projects that could benefit through the proposed new crowdfunding platform.

### d) **Do Most**

Discontinue the Voluntary Grants Scheme (£50,000 per annum) and Aspire Community Grants Scheme (£30,000).

The Executive Liaison Group considered this mandate at its meeting on 30 June 2021 and expressed support for Option (b).

## GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - CONSIDERATIONS

**6. Who are the lead Director and Service Manager who will lead and direct the project and use/maintain the projects products once they are handed over?**

Dawn Hudd, Strategic Services Director  
Steve Benbough, Strategy and Communications Manager

**7. What are the impacts on other Operational Service Leaders or projects?**

The Aspire Community Grants Scheme supports the work of the Community Services Manager. However, the planned new crowdfunding platform will provide an alternative mechanism for funding projects that build and strengthen communities.

**8. What general approach will the project take to deliver?**

Any decision will be implemented and managed by the Strategy and Communications Manager.

**9. When and why must the project start and finish?**

A decision is required as part of the preparation of the draft 2022/23 budget.

The planned launch of the new crowdfunding platform in Autumn 2021 provides the changed context in which to review our grant support to external organisations at the present time.

# GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - RESOURCES

## 10. Which stakeholders are, or will need to be, involved in the project?

Community Services Manager  
Corporate Management Team  
Lead Councillor/Executive

## 11. What specialist resources (internal and external) are needed to consider this mandate and develop a strategic outline business case?

A strategic outline business case will not be required and any decisions will be taken forward as part of the Council's savings strategy.

## 12. What Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) are the likely Whole Life Costs (WLC) of the project and live service?

Current funding for our grant schemes (and the full scope of potential savings) is £80,000 per annum.

# GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - RISKS, ASSUMPTIONS & ISSUES

## 13. What are the strategic Risks, Assumptions, Issues, Dependencies, Constraints & Opportunities?

### **Risks**

Criticism about any cessation or reduction of funding for voluntary organisations caring for vulnerable people.

Crowdfunding is not as successful as planned in leveraging alternative funding for community projects that support corporate priorities.

### **Assumptions**

That the Council wishes to review priorities for funding in light of current financial constraints, particularly discretionary services and grants.

As the schemes only provide small grants their discontinuation will not threaten the existence of any specific organisations.

Grant recipients are aware that they cannot rely on annual grant schemes for ongoing core funding.

Crowdfunding will provide an alternative source of funding (together with the Guildford Community Lottery).

### **Issues**

Grants for priority organisations are provided through funding agreements (outside grant schemes).

Guildford is the only funder of some county-wide or multi-borough voluntary organisations applying for grants.

The Voluntary Grants Scheme is a legacy of a former tripartite scheme with SCC and NHS and supports organisations beyond our remit or outside our own key responsibilities.

# GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS – DEPENDENCIES, CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

## **Dependencies**

None (although the successful launch of a crowdfunding platform would mitigate some of the risks).

## **Constraints**

Decisions required as part of the 2022/23 budget preparation process.

Long-term financial pressures and the need to focus on discretionary spend as part of our savings programme.

## **Opportunities**

To deliver financial savings required as part of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan and savings strategy.

To encourage and support organisations to use the Guildford Community Lottery and crowdfunding platforms as fundraising tools.



# INTERNAL GBC STAKEHOLDERS (CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE/MANDATE)

## **Involved or sighted so far**

Steve Benbough, Strategy & Comms Manager (author)  
Sam Adam, PMO Officer  
Faye Gould, Procurement Manager  
Dawn Hudd, Strategic Services Director  
Sam Hutchison, Community Services Manager  
Jo James, Senior Policy Officer (Strategy)  
Yasmin Makin, Policy Officer (Strategy)  
Louise Odell, Interim Project Officer  
Dianne Owens, Lead Specialist Legal  
Vicky Worsfold, Lead Specialist Finance  
Corporate Management Team  
Councillor Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council  
Councillor Julia McShane, Lead Councillor

## **To be consulted at the next step**

Executive Liaison Group

## APPENDIX 1 – NEW SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

Guildford Action Day Service <i>(Day service provision for people at risk of homelessness.)</i>	£90,000
Citizens Advice County Court Service <i>(Guildford County Court helpdesk service – particularly housing and homelessness advice.)</i>	£5,000
Oakleaf <i>(Social inclusion activities and services for people with mental health problems.)</i>	£20,000
Canterbury Care Centre <i>(Support services and drop-in-centre for people with mental health problems.)</i>	£20,000
Guildford Action for Families <i>(Support for vulnerable parents and children in a home setting or community group.)</i>	£30,000
Homestart <i>(Support for vulnerable families.)</i>	£5,000
Home Support Services Guildford <i>(Home support service for the elderly)</i>	£20,000

## APPENDIX 2 – PREVIOUS REVIEW OF GRANTS

Annual Expenditure	£	Annual Savings	£
New Funding Agreements	190,000	Former Voluntary Grants Scheme	178,870
New Voluntary Grants Scheme	50,000	Former Community Grants Scheme	168,360
Increased Core Funding for CABs	28,340		
New Aspire Grants Scheme	30,000		
New Crowdfunding Platform	80,000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>378,340</b>		<b>347,230</b>

## APPENDIX 3 – VOLUNTARY GRANTS SCHEME 2021/22

Ash, Ash Vale, Ash Green Coronavirus Support Group (support and food parcels)	£5,000
CHIPS Guildford (supporting vulnerable children and families in North Guildford)	£5,000
Surrey Welfare Rights Unit (local advice support)	£5,000
Crossroads Care Surrey (support for carers)	£5,000
Disability Challengers (support for disabled children)	£2,500
Horsley and Bookham Riding for the Disabled Association (support for the disabled)	£2,500
ThriveFit Charity (support for those with cancer and mental health issues)	£2,500
Shooting Star Children's Hospice's (emergency respite care)	£2,000
TALK Surrey (stroke support groups)	£2,000
Age UK Surrey (Men in Sheds)	£2,000
The Brigitte Trust	£2,000
Sight for Surrey (support for the blind/partially sighted)	£1,500
St John the Evangelist Church Merrow (support for babies of less advantaged families)	£1,000
Autism All Stars Foundation (support for children with autism)	£1,000
Appeer CIC (support for autistic and neurodiverse girls)	£1,000
Guildford Baptist Church (Millmead Holiday at Home)	£600