

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

28th July 2020

STRATEGIC GRANTS PROGRAMME EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dennis Knowles – Community Well-Being

Responsible Officer: Mrs Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration

Reason for report: To agree the procedure for a review of strategic grant funding for financial years 2021-24.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Community PDG nominates members for a working group to look at the Council's funding priorities for the period 2021-24
2. That the committee asks Cabinet to set the level of funding for the three years 2021-24.

Financial Implications: The budget allocated for the combined grants during the 2020/21 financial year was £148,150 (£71,650 + £45,000 + £31,500). The funding available for 2021-24 will be dependent on the Council's budgetary review this autumn.

Legal Implications: In the event that funding priorities change and a proposal comes forward which will result in some organisations receiving less or no funding, careful consideration should be given to whether such a proposal ought to be subject to a form of consultation before a final decision is made. This is not to say that it should be – rather that the need for consultation (or otherwise) should be addressed.

Risk Assessment: The purpose of the working group is to provide a more informed basis for decision making and will minimise risks with regard to any potential change to the grants.

Equality Impact Assessment: The grants provided by the Council are intended to fund organisations that offer strategic benefit to the district either through their support to vulnerable residents, or their contribution to the local economy. Each of these organisations will have their own Equality policies and procedures in place.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The allocation of grants provides support to external agencies delivering services that advance the Council's Homes, Community and Economy priorities.

Impact on Climate Change: Ensuring that residents are able to get information and advice through locally delivered services and are able to access local cultural, leisure and green space opportunities reduces travel and related environmental impact.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Strategic Grants Programme 2017-2020 the Council offered three-year funding to five external agencies whose services were seen to be of strategic importance in supporting Mid Devon's vulnerable residents and complementing the Council's own services.
- 1.2 In addition, the Council provided funding under its Economic Development budget to support the running of the Grand Western Canal, and Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life, including the Tourist Information Service as key organisations supporting the tourism sector, and therefore the local economy.
- 1.3 For the years 2017-2020 grants amounting to £148,150 annually were distributed to these seven organisations.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Age UK Mid Devon	9,650	9,650	9,650
Churches Housing Action Team (CHAT)	12,500	12,500	12,500
Citizens Advice	15,500	15,500	25,500
Involve – Voluntary Action in Mid Devon	12,000	12,000	12,000
Mid Devon Mobility ¹	22,000 ²	22,000 ²	22,000 ²
Strategic Grants Programme	71,650	71,650	71,650
Grand Western Canal	45,000	45,000	45,000
Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life	27,500	27,500	27,500
Tourist Information Service	4,000	4,000	4,000
Economic Development Grants	76,500	76,500	76,500
TOTAL GRANTS	148,150	148,150	148,150

¹ formerly Tiverton and District Community Transport Association, TDCTA

² Of which £5,600 is deducted at source to pay for rental of Shopmobility Office in MSCP

- 1.4 At a Cabinet meeting on the 19th December 2019 it was agreed to extend the strategic grants programme for a further year to Mar 2021 in order to undertake a thorough review of the grants programme, and to include in the review the two organisations funded through economic development budget. The detailed resolutions at this meeting were as follows:

- That recipients of all grant agreements in place as part of the council's strategic grants programme are offered a single year extension (to end 31st March 2021) to ensure continuity of service provision.
- That recipients of the two grants not currently included within the council's strategic grants programme (Grand Western Canal and Tiverton Museum and Tourist Information Service) are also offered a single-year extension (to end 31st March 2021) to ensure continuity of service provision.

- That in future years all grants are considered as part of one budget and decision-making process, and that these sit within the Community Well-Being portfolio.
- That officers are instructed to commence work early in the financial year 2020/21 to initiate a full evaluation and review of the grants programme; to carry out the same process as was undertaken previously to establish the 3-year programme; and to bring forward recommendations on a new 3-year programme with reference to the Community PDG as appropriate.

1.5 Following these resolutions, a report was due to be presented at the Community PDG on the 23rd March to initiate the Grants Review process. However, due to the Covid19 lockdown the committee meeting was cancelled and the Grants Review was put on hold.

1.6 Following the easing of lockdown it is now opportune to revisit the grants review so that the necessary budgetary decisions are made for the financial year 2021-22 and external organisations have a clear and early understanding of their funding position from 2021 onwards.

1.7 Moreover, the Covid19 epidemic provides a further reason to re-assess and re-set our relationships with the voluntary sector, given the new emerging needs within the community, and the economic impact of the pandemic not only on the Council, but also on the voluntary sector and on residents

2.0 **Strategic Grants Programme 2021-24**

2.1 Under the Strategic Grants Programme 2017-2020, grants were offered under three service areas:

- Welfare Information and Advice
- Community Transport Services
- Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Support

2.2 With the extension of the Strategic Grants Programme to include grants to the Grand Western Canal, Tiverton Museum and Tourist Information Service, these categories no longer encompass the range of objectives the Council may wish to support.

2.3 Furthermore, the changed circumstances created by the coronavirus pandemic make it even more appropriate to review the Council's objectives for the grants programme, and its priorities for investment in the community and voluntary sectors.

2.4 It is therefore proposed, that the Community PDG sets up a working group to draw up a clear set of priorities for the grants programme. At the same time, in view of the need to review the Council's budgets this autumn as a response to the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council's own finances, it seeks

from Cabinet a view on the level of funding likely to be available for the period 2021-24.

- 2.5 In order to undertake the review, and give voluntary and community sector organisations sufficient notice of intended funding levels for 2021-24, the following timetable is proposed

Step	Milestone	Date
	Report to Community Wellbeing PDG	28 th July 2020
	Setting up of working party to develop detailed criteria for Strategic Grants Programme	August 2020
	Report to Community Wellbeing PDG	22 nd Sept 2020
	Decision by Cabinet on grant priorities	1 st Oct 2020
	Invitation for bids to the 2021-24 Strategic Grants Programme	2 nd Oct 2020
	Deadline for applications	15 th Nov 2020
	Assessment of applications	Nov - Dec 2020
	Grant awards announced	by 31 st Dec 2021
	Funding agreements issued and signed off	March 2021
	New arrangements implemented	April 2021

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Circulation of the report: Cllr Dennis Knowles

List of background papers: