

COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
20th DECEMBER 2021

STRATEGIC GRANTS REVIEW

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

Responsible Officer: Richard Marsh, Director of Place

Reason for report: To report back on the recommendations of the Grants Working Group following the completion of the 2021 Strategic Grants Review.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Community PDG considers the recommendations made by the Strategic Grants Working Group at paragraph 2.4 before making its own recommendations to Cabinet.

Financial Implications: The budget allocated for strategic grants during the 2021/22 financial year was £138,500. The funding available for 2022-23 and subsequent years is dependent on the Council's budget setting process. Accordingly, the PDG has the opportunity to make recommendations to the Cabinet on the level of the grants budget for 22-23 and subsequent years, and the level of funding for each organisation.

Legal Implications: In the event that funding priorities change and a proposal comes forward which will result in an organisation receiving considerably less funding than in previous years, careful consideration should be given to whether such a proposal ought to be subject to a consultation before a final decision is made.

Risk Assessment: Following an agreed Strategic Grants Review process minimises the risk of challenge regarding any potential changes to the grants budget, or grants level to individual organisations.

Equality Impact Assessment: In the event that funding priorities change and a proposal comes forward which will result in an organisation receiving considerably less or no funding, a full Equality Impact Assessment should be done to assess the potential impact of such cuts on residents before a final decision is made.

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 Background

- 1.1 At a meeting of Community Policy Development Group (Community PDG) on the 21st September 2021, the committee agreed to undertake a review of the Council's Strategic Grants, as recommended at the end of the previous settlement period. The purpose of the review was set out as:
- To ensure that the Council's investment in strategic partners is directed appropriately to meet the needs of residents and support the Council's own priorities as expressed in its Corporate Plan
 - To ensure that funding achieves real outcomes for the community and value for money for taxpayers
 - To report back to members on what has been achieved with the previous year's funding
- 1.2 To facilitate the review, the Community PDG nominated four members to act as a working group to receive written submissions and presentations from the Council's strategic partners and to make recommendations on priorities and funding levels for 2022-23 onwards. The terms of reference for the review are provided in the attached document, [Strategic Grants Review 2021 – Guidelines](#).
- 1.3 The six recipients of the Council's strategic grants are as follows:
- Citizens Advice, Torridge, North, Mid & West Devon
 - Churches Housing Action Team
 - Mid Devon Mobility
(formerly Tiverton and District Community Transport Association)
 - INVOLVE
 - Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life
 - Including a separate grant for Tourist Information Services
 - Grand Western Canal (managed by Devon County Council)
- 1.3 As part of the review, grant recipients were asked to submit their most recent annual report and annual accounts, and a business plan and budget forecast covering the period 2022-23. They were also asked to provide a written summary that covered the following topics:
- Organisational aims and objectives
 - Services provided
 - Benefits of these services to Mid Devon residents and visitors
 - How their services meet the priorities of the Council as laid out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24, or other MDDC service requirements
 - Financial information for the previous three years, and forecasts for the following year
 - Key pressures and issues facing the organisation (*including any financial pressures, pressure on services, pressures on staffing capacity, changing needs in the community etc.*)

- The effect of a reduction in funding of 5%, 10% or 20% respectively on the organisation and the level of service provision, and its impact on residents

1.4 They were also invited to make a presentation to the working group on the work of the organisation, the impact of the pandemic on organisational services and finances, the impact of the pandemic on service users and key issues for the organisation going forward – including any future plans / opportunities / challenges. The presentations to the Strategic Grants Working Group took place on the 18th and 19th November 2021. The written submissions and presentations are available on request.

2.0 Findings of the Working Group

- 2.1 Members of the working group recognised the valuable work of the Council's strategic partners in meeting the needs of Mid Devon residents and commended them for their presentations, and the opportunity to discuss their current situations and the needs of the community. They recognised the huge impact the pandemic has had on the Council's partners, and praised the sectors adaptability in finding ways to deliver their services in the changed circumstances, and in developing new services to meet the emerging needs of residents. They wanted to recommend specifically that the Museum and the Canal make special efforts to attract visitors from the Crediton side of the district, so that children in particular can take advantage of these two assets.
- 2.2 They realised that the pandemic has financially impacted organisations, while noting that some partners had been able access additional funding to meet specific needs and develop new services. They commended those organisations that were looking to organic growth to develop new funding streams. The working group would want to encourage organisations to continue to look for external funding and other sources of earned income in order to mitigate against possible funding cuts in the future.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 At the final meeting of the Strategic Grants Working Group on the 29th November, it was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Community PDG **RECOMMEND** to the Cabinet that:

The total Strategic Grants budget remained at £138,500 for a period of 2 years, and that individual awards to Strategic Partners remained at the 2020-2021 levels for this period.

- 3.2 The level of grant awards to individual partners for 2022-23 and 2023-24 were therefore recommended as:

Organisation	Award 2021-2022 (£)	Award 2022-2023 (£)	Award 2023-2024 (£)
CHAT	12,500	12,500	12,500
Citizen's Advice	15,500	15,500	15,500

INVOLVE	12,000	12,000	12,000
Mid Devon Mobility	22,000	22,000	22,000
Grand Western Canal	45,000	45,000	45,000
Tiverton Museum	27,500	27,500	27,500
TIS	4,000	4,000	4,000
Total	£138,500	£138,500	£138,500

Contact for more information:

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Circulation of the report: Cllr Dennis Knowles

List of background papers:

Strategic Grants Review 2021 - Guidelines