

**COMMUNITY AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 19 JANUARY 2021
CABINET – 3 FEBRUARY 2021**

COMMUNITY GRANTS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Community Grant awards, totalling £127,000 in revenue grants and £80,300 in capital grants, as set out in Appendix 1, and in more detail in Appendix 2, be approved and recommended to Cabinet for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and proposed budget for 2021/22.
- 1.2 That the Panel support the proposal to bring grants to the Care Groups into scope of the Grants Panel for their task and finish process during 2021, for consideration in the 2022/23 budget, noting historic arrangements will continue for 2021/22.
- 1.3 That the Panel note the intent to publish a joint Portfolio Holder Decision Notice to confirm the Service Level Agreements to enable the continuation of the transportation themed grants across the District.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 30 October and 5 November the Community Grants Task and Finish Group met to examine the Community Grant applications received for the 2021/2022 financial year. Twenty four applicants attended, and each gave a Skype presentation to the Task & Finish Group, followed by a question and answer session.
- 2.2 The Task and Finish Group comprised Cllrs Alvey, Blunden, Davis, J Davies, S Davies O'Sullivan, and Sevier, with input from key Council Officers. Meetings were also attended by Cllr Mrs D Andrews, the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs.

3. PROCESS

- 3.1 As part of their application, all Community Grant applicants were asked to provide details of their accounts, and how their application would meet the needs of, and benefit or support, residents in the District. Applicants were also asked to explain how their funding request linked to the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and how they supported residents through the pandemic. Particular consideration was given to those organisations which supported issues that were highlighted in the Council's Community Engagement forums with partner organisations, e.g. mental health and isolation.
- 3.2 Following the presentations, the Task and Finish Group discussed and reviewed the information submitted with the applications and presented at interview. In formulating a recommendation for each grant request, members took into account the agreed criteria, the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, and the value for money being offered.
- 3.3 The recommendations, with reasons, for the determination of each of the grant requests, are summarised in **Appendix 1** and in further detail in **Appendix 2**.

4. CARE GRANTS

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group also considered the Care Grants which are given each year to local groups that support clients who need to attend repeated medical journeys to hospital, and who do not have the means, either because they do not drive, do not have access to public transport, or are elderly or disabled.
- 4.2 These grants were originally agreed in partnership with Hampshire County Council and Community First New Forest prior to 2008.
- 4.3 Funding allocations are awarded based either on the original agreement for the larger groups, or on request from the smaller groups depending on the demand. During 2020/21 the larger Group (New Milton) received a grant of £1,500 whilst the smaller groups requested grant amounts between £200 and £598.
- 4.4 The Task and Finish Group reviewed the Care Grants arrangements and recognised the benefit and value of the scheme. To ensure transparency and consistency with all Community Grants, the Group considered that grants exceeding £600 should be within the scope of the annual Community Grants Panel process going forward (next applicable for applications for inclusion in the 2022/23 budget), and sit alongside all other grant requests. For grants for less than £600, the applicant will be directed to their local ward Councillor(s).
- 4.5 To provide continuity in the scheme for 2021/22, the Service Manager for Revenue and Benefits will administer the applications and payments for 2021/22 in line with the historic process and £4,040 budget.

5. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS VIA HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

- 5.1 There are 3 Service Level Agreements with Hampshire County Council for transportation projects all coming to the end of their current agreement period:
- Wheels to work – This is a moped loan service which aims to help people between 16 and 25 with no access to suitable transport get to work, apprenticeships, training or job interviews.
 - Call and Go – This is a bookable community transport service for anyone whose transport needs are not met by public bus services to go, for example, shopping, to visit a library or to see family and friends. Drivers will assist with carrying shopping and wheelchair accessible minibuses collect users from their home at a pre-arranged time. The cost will vary according to the distance travelled.
 - Group Hire – Wheelchair accessible minibuses are available to hire for voluntary or charitable organisations for a period of 3 hours to one week. The cost of hire depends on the distance travelled and duration of hire period.
- 5.2 The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure will work alongside the Portfolio Holder for Community Affairs on a joint Portfolio Holder Decision notice to confirm the values of support that the Council will offer under a revised set of Service Level Agreements.
- 5.3 Any level of agreed support will be within the annual budget available, which for 2021/22 is £45,750.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Grants Panel were advised that the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan had allowed for up to £130,000 to be awarded on Revenue Grants and up to £100,000 for Capital Grants.
- 6.2 The proposals, as set out in Appendix 1 total £127,000 of Revenue grants and £80,300 for Capital grants. The total amount of awards granted last year was £116,000 for Revenue and £97,650 for Capital.
- 6.3 The proposed budget for 2021/22 for the Care Grants is £4,040, as outlined in Section 4 of this report, the same as amount as budgeted in 2020/21.
- 6.4 The proposed budget for 2021/22 for the Service Level Agreements, as outlined in section 5 of this report is £45,750, the same as budgeted in 2020/21.

7. DOCUMENTATION / PROCESS

- 7.1 As recommended in the Cabinet report in 2020, a thorough review of the website content has been completed, as well as implementing an online application process which received positive feedback.

Further information:

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Background Papers:

Community Grants Appendix
1 and 2