

REPORT TO: Grants Advisory Committee and Finance Portfolio Holder 21 June 2018
LEAD OFFICER: Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing

Community Chest Review 2018

Purpose

1. To review the criteria and decision-making timeline for the Community Chest grant scheme and make recommendations to the Finance Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.
2. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Grants Advisory Committee reviews the Community Chest grant scheme and makes recommendations to the Finance Portfolio Holder and Cabinet to:
 - (a) amend the Community Chest grant scheme criteria and/or decision-making timeline; or
 - (b) make no changes to the Community Chest grant scheme criteria and/or decision-making timeline.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. On 24 May the Leader and Finance Portfolio Holder decided to temporarily close the Community Chest and Community Energy Grants scheme to allow elected members to review the schemes' criteria. It was also agreed that applications received on or before 31 May 2018 would be considered using the schemes existing criteria.
5. The terms of reference for the Grants Advisory Committee state that the Committee's function is:

"To consider and make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder responsible for grants, or Cabinet as appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- Review of the Council's grant schemes to ensure they reflect Council priorities.
 - Design of any new or revised grants schemes, including consideration of criteria and guidance applicable in respect of each scheme.
 - Consideration of applications made under the Council's grants schemes."
6. The Community Chest is a popular grant scheme and there have been a number of enquiries regarding the timeline for re-opening the scheme since its temporary closure on 31 May. A swift recommendation by the Committee will allow the scheme to re-open promptly following a decision by the Finance Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.

Background

7. The Community Chest was first set up by the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership in 2008/09 with funding provided by government. In 2011/12, once the government funding had stopped, the Council decided to continue to fund the scheme. The scheme has evolved and developed over the years.
8. The base budget for the Community Chest has remained stable since 2012/13. The base budget in 2011/12 was £30,000 and from 2012/13 to 2018/19 is £57,000. The amount of funding actually awarded has varied each year due to additional funding sometimes being vired into the Community Chest where, for example, other grants schemes have underspent or been returned.
9. The number of grants awarded per annum, plus the total amount of funding awarded each year is set out below:

Year	Number of Awards	Funding allocated (£)
2011/12	46	29,457
2012/13	78	56,762
2013/14	58	50,213
2014/15	65	73,678
2015/16	73	84,470
2016/17	63	78,977
2017/18	103	88,963

10. Applications are mainly submitted online, via a short online form. Paper copies are available where this is not possible.
11. On 24 May the Leader and Finance Portfolio Holder decided to temporarily close the Community Chest and Community Energy Grants scheme to allow elected members to review the schemes' criteria. It was also agreed that applications received on or before 31 May 2018 would be considered using the schemes existing criteria.
12. The terms of reference for the Grants Advisory Committee state that the Committee's function is:

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- Consideration of applications made under the Council's grants schemes."

Considerations

13. The existing Community Chest guidance notes, which include the criteria, can be found at Appendix A. In order to review the criteria, the Grants Advisory Committee could consider the following questions:
- (a) Do you agree with the Community Chest description under the heading “What is the Community Chest?” If not, what should it say?
 - (b) Do you agree with the list of eligible groups who can apply? Are there any you would like to add or remove?
 - (c) What do you think projects should be required to deliver? The Grants Advisory Committee’s terms of reference state that you should review the Council’s grant schemes to ensure they reflect Council priorities. Does it?
(See ‘What must the project deliver?’ and ‘Community Chest 2018-2019: SCDC Priorities/Aims’ and the end of the document.)
 - (d) Should the scheme be limited to ‘projects’?
 - (e) Do you agree with the list of projects that can and cannot be funded? Do they meet Council priorities? Should anything be added or removed?
 - (f) Do you think that the maximum award should remain at £1,000?
 - (g) Should the limit of £3,000 per parish per annum remain in place?
 - (h) Should match funding be required?
 - (i) Do you think that grants should continue to be awarded on a first come first served basis starting in April each year?
 - (j) Is there any further documentation that you feel officers should require in order to process a grant application? (It has been highlighted recently that the form should require applicants to state the length of lease and lease end date if they are leasing land/property and requesting funding for improvements.)
 - (k) Do you agree with the list of funding conditions? Should anything be added or removed?
14. The Community Chest is a popular grant scheme and there have been a number of enquiries regarding the timeline for re-opening the scheme since its temporary closure on 31 May.

Options

15. The Grants Advisory Committee could:
- (a) review the Community Chest grant scheme and make recommendations to the Finance Portfolio Holder and Cabinet to amend the Community Chest grant scheme criteria and/or decision-making timeline; or
 - (b) review the Community Chest grant scheme and make recommendations to the Finance Portfolio Holder and Cabinet make no changes to the Community Chest grant scheme criteria and/or decision-making timeline; or
 - (c) start to review the Community Chest grant scheme, requesting further information or work to be carried out by officers in advance of a second-stage discussion at its next meeting and/or consultation, prior to making recommendations to the Finance Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.

Implications

16. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

17. This report is not seeking to amend the amount of funding available in the Community Chest. It is assumed that the funds, as agreed by Council in February remain in place for 2018/19.

Risk Management

18. Risk to the Council is managed via the documentation that is required of applicants plus agreement of the grant conditions.

Equality and Diversity

19. Depending on the amount of changes recommended it may be necessary to carrying out an EQIA screening.

Consultation responses

20. None.

Effect on Strategic Aims

21. The review will ensure that the Community Chest grant scheme reflects Council priorities.

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