

REPORT TO: Grants Advisory Committee

27 July 2018

LEAD OFFICER: Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing

Community Chest Review 2018

Purpose

1. To consider the proposed changes to the criteria for the Community Chest grant scheme and make recommendations to Cabinet.
2. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Grants Advisory Committee recommends to Cabinet the changes to the Community Chest guidance notes, which include the criteria, as set out at Appendix A.

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. Swift recommendations by the Committee will allow the scheme to re-open promptly following a decision by 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.”
13. At its meeting on 21 June, the Grants Advisory Committee agreed to hold an elected member and officer workshop to review the Community Chest criteria. The workshop was held on 12 July and included the following participants, which included all members of the Committee and any substitutes that were able to attend:
- (a) Councillor Jose Hales
 - (b) Councillor Clare Delderfield
 - (c) Councillor Claire Daunton
 - (d) Councillor Sue Ellington
 - (e) Councillor Peter McDonald
 - (f) Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson
 - (g) Councillor Shrobona Bhattacharya
 - (h) Councillor Bunty Waters
 - (i) Gemma Barron – Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing
 - (j) Katherine Southwood – Project Officer

Considerations

14. In considering the Community Chest criteria, the following points were discussed at the workshop on 12 July:
- (a) Keep name as Community Chest (good brand awareness).
 - (b) Parish Councils should be ineligible, however, non-precepting Parish Meetings should be able to apply (parishes have the ability to use s137; more money available for other local groups).
 - (c) Where a charity applies, officers to make checks re charity status.
 - (d) Educational establishments / PTAs should remain eligible as long as there is wider community benefit.
 - (e) Faith groups should remain eligible as long as there is wider community benefit or under historic buildings category.
 - (f) Membership groups such as scouting groups and sports clubs should remain eligible, but priority to be given to community projects/activities that have a youth development focus.
 - (g) Should amend requirements to:
 - a. Remove reference to delivery of SCDC priorities/aims (Corporate Plan)
 - b. Add 'Promote healthy and active communities', 'develop skills' and 'Enhance the natural environment'.

- (h) Should amend to 'community activities and projects' where the eligibility currently mentions projects.
 - (i) Suggest remove specific mention of 'Tree and hedge planting' (to be covered under wider heading of enhancing the natural environment).
 - (j) Should not fund activities or projects that are deemed to be the responsibility of parish councils or other public sector organisations.
 - (k) Should not fund promotional materials.
 - (l) Restriction of maximum of £3,000 per parish to be replaced with 'Maximum amount of funding in any financial year to be based on size of ward:
 - Maximum £3,000 – 1 x district council elected member ward
 - Maximum £6,000 – 2 x district council elected member ward
 - Maximum £9,000 – 3 x district council elected member ward'.
 - (m) New communities could receive additional funding at the decision-makers discretion.
 - (n) Keep maximum award at £1,000.
 - (o) Should require 50% match funding from parish council if project on parish council land.
 - (p) Suggest 50% funding to be released on 1 April annually and remaining 50% to be released on 1 October annually. Applications to continue to be allocated on first-come first-served basis.
 - (q) If related land/buildings are leased, applicant must state length of lease. Decision-makers discretion regarding award based on lease length.
 - (r) If parish council not financially contributing to project/activity, ask applicant to provide reason.
 - (s) The Council should provide "Funded by South Cambridgeshire District Council" stickers where appropriate (plaques are already available).
15. The existing Community Chest guidance notes, which include the criteria, have been updated (shown as tracked changes) based on the discussions at the workshop (see Appendix A).
 16. 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

17. The Grants Advisory Committee could recommend to Cabinet:

- (a) the changes to the Community Chest guidance notes, which include the criteria, as set out at Appendix A; or
- (b) an amended version of the changes to the Community Chest guidance notes, which include the criteria, as set out at Appendix A; or
- (c) to make no amendments to the Community Chest criteria.

Implications

18. 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

19. 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

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

Equality and Diversity

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

Consultation responses

22. None.

Effect on Strategic Aims

23. The recommended changes continue to reflect the Council priorities.

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