



Report To: Grants Advisory Committee

26 April 2019

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor John Williams

Lead Officer: Director, Health and Environmental Services

Community Chest: Review

Purpose

1. To consider revisions to the Community Chest grant criteria, making recommendations to Cabinet, as appropriate.
2. This is not a key decision, however, has been brought before the Grants Advisory Committee following agreement of Terms of Reference for the Grants Advisory Committee at Council on 23 May 2018.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Grants Advisory Committee approve the updates to the grants criteria (see Appendix A) and recommend any amendments to Cabinet, as appropriate.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Grants Advisory Committee's role is to consider and make recommendations to the Lead Cabinet Member responsible for grants, or Cabinet as appropriate, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Review of the Council's grants schemes to ensure they reflect Council priorities;
 - (b) Design of any new or revised grants schemes, including consideration of criteria and guidance applicable in respect of each scheme;
 - (c) Consideration of applications made under the Council's grants schemes.
5. Having recently reviewed the criteria for the Community Chest Grant Fund, members of the Grants Advisory Committee felt it prudent to make some additional changes to refine the criteria further following meetings held in February and March 2019. These additional changes are recommended in order to keep the scheme's criteria relevant and in-line with the Council's recently published Business Plan.

Background

6. On 24 May 2018 the Council Leader and Lead Member for Finance decided to temporarily close the Community Chest Grant scheme to allow newly elected members to review the scheme's criteria. It was also agreed that applications received on or before 31 May 2018 would be considered using the scheme's existing criteria.

7. Applications were suspended between 1 June and 7 October 2018 in order to review the criteria and aims so as to ensure alignment with the priorities of the new Administration. Following a workshop between the Grants Advisory Committee and Officers, the revised criteria and guidance were put forward to Cabinet and agreed on 5 September 2018.
8. Two notable changes at that time were:
 - (a) Parish Councils with 160 registered electors or more are ineligible to apply.
 - (b) Projects or initiatives on Parish Council land, if successful, will only receive a 50% grant with the other half expected to be match-funded by the Parish Council.
9. Since the new grants criteria has been in use, there have been a number of representations made to members of the Committee regarding the eligibility criteria, and in particular, with relation to Parish Councils or Parish Meetings with less than 160 registered electors especially where there are multiple settlements under a single Parish Council/Meeting.
10. Consequently some additional changes have been made to refine the criteria further and, if accepted, will take effect from 1 October 2019 when the second half of the Grant Fund is released – as per the current guidance.

Considerations

11. In previous meetings it was noted that Political parties are not precluded from applying and wished the guidance to be amended to reflect this.
12. At the February Grants Committee meeting it was suggested that parishes that have more than one settlement, some of which are very small, are currently disadvantaged by the criteria.
13. At the March meeting, in order to align the Fund more closely with the Council's new Business Plan, in particular the Council's priority 'Being Green to our Core', it was suggested that applications, where possible and appropriate, should promote green projects and sustainability. The application form will be amended in order to capture this alignment.
14. It is appropriate to remove any reference to "Community Energy Grant" as this has been discontinued.
15. Debate any new additions/alterations/removals of existing criteria, to be recommended to the Lead Cabinet Member.

Options

16. The Grants Advisory Committee could:
 - (a) approve the updates to the grants criteria (see Appendix A to this report), and recommend to the Lead Cabinet Member to refine the Community Chest grant scheme criteria; or
 - (b) reject the updates to the grants criteria made in Appendix A to this report and recommend to the Lead Cabinet Member to make no further changes to the Community Chest grant scheme criteria at this time.

Implications

17. 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:
18. **Financial**
This report is not seeking to amend the amount of funding available in the Community Chest. It is assumed that the funds, as agreed in the budget will remain in place for 2019/20.
- Risk Management**
19. Risk to the Council is managed via the documentation that is required of applicants plus agreement of the grant conditions.
- Consultation responses**
20. The additional changes are the result of representations made to elected members and feedback on the changes made in Sept 2018.
- Effect on Strategic Aims**
21. The review will ensure that the Community Chest grant scheme reflects Council priorities.

Report Author: Ryan Coetsee – Project Officer, Sustainable Communities and Environment
Telephone: 01954 713461