

TITLE: Draft Grants Review

Committee: Commercial Services Committee.

Date: Tuesday 15th January 2019

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[T179]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To note and approve the outcome of the Community Grants Review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 Members are requested to:

1. Note the detail of the Community Grants Review
2. To approve the recommendations as set out in option 2 at point 8:2 of this report

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The District Council recognise the value and contribution that community grants make to the life of residents in East Cambridgeshire. The Council administers three community grant pots which play a crucial role in meeting a wide variety of community needs, including supporting the upkeep and development of open spaces, village halls, play areas and leisure facilities and providing support to community groups, events and projects. These three grants are Section 106, Facilities Improvement Grant and Community Fund Grant.

3.2 Links to Corporate Plan Priorities 2017 – 19

The table below illustrates how the current community grants contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities 2017-20 and the Communities and Partnerships Service priorities:

Links to ECDC Corporate Plan priorities 2017-20	Improving Infrastructure
	A fantastic place to live, work and visit
	New jobs and funding
Links to Communities and Partnerships Service priorities	Support community resilience and wellbeing
	Ensure that the district's green spaces meet the needs of the local community and empower local

3.3 Aims of Community Grant Review

This review aims to ensure that the Council's community grants are distributed effectively and meet community needs. The review seeks to ensure that grants are used in the most effective way with a criteria and system in place that enables communities most in need to benefit.

The Council closely monitors the outcomes of community grants and assesses the effectiveness of the grants. The findings of ongoing monitoring has resulted in the requirement for a more comprehensive review therefore is timely that the District Council evaluates the ways in which it supports communities to ensure that:

- East Cambridgeshire communities are receiving the support and assistance that they require;
- Best value for money is achieved.

4.0 Current Financial Considerations

The Council currently funds each of the organisations on an annual basis. This is funded from resources in the Communities & Partnerships budget:

The budget for community grants for 2018/19 is as follows:

4.1 Section 106: Each area has a different amount depending on what has been secured through the Section 106 agreement, availability varies and this will be communicated to the relevant area at the time the publicising begins.

4.2 Facilities Improvement Grants: £45,000

4.3 Community Fund: £7,650

5.0 **Current Community Grants Outcomes (between 2015-18)**

This section provides an overview of the key outcomes achieved by each of the community grants between 2015 -18. The information is based on data provided from the application organisations.

5.1 Purpose of Community Fund

The purpose of the Community Fund grants are to support local community groups to provide new or developing existing community

services and initiatives that improve the quality of life for residents living in East Cambridgeshire.

To be able to apply the groups must be either a registered charity, a Company Limited by Guarantee, an unincorporated club or association or a Community Interest Company.

All of the information below is based upon the information received from applicants and project summary reports.

5.2 Community Fund Outcomes

- There were 24 community grants awarded between 2015-2018 (8 per year)
- Over the past 3 years only 8 specific parishes benefited from these grants the majority of successful applications were from Ely (10), Little Downham (5) and Haddenham (3). There were 6 grants awarded for district wide projects.

5.3 Types of Groups Awarded

1. 46% of community fund grants were awarded to unincorporated groups or associations
 2. 42% was awarded to charities
 3. 8% other
 4. 4% Community interest company
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5.4 Beneficiaries

- There were 76,000 beneficiaries.(estimated figures including visitors to Ely for one of the projects)
- There is a very even spread of primary age group beneficiaries, with each age category receiving between 14% - 19% of monies awarded, as shown below :

Primary Age Group of Beneficiaries

1. 19% young people
 2. 18% early years
 3. 17% young adults
 4. 16% adults & 16% children
 5. 14% seniors
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5.5 Types of Beneficiaries

- There was an even spread of types of beneficiaries that benefitted from the grants, as shown below :
 1. 16% disadvantaged people with low income
 2. 7% for people in rural areas, 7% for families and 7% for local residents
 3. 6% for people not in education or training
 4. 5% for adults
 5. 4% for older people, 4% for village residents, 4% long term unemployed, 4% black and ethnic minority groups, 4% for carers, 4 % lone parents & 4% children and young people, 4% for people with disabilities, 4% for alcohol and drug addiction and 4% for other
 6. 3% for health and wellbeing, 3% for lesbian, gay and bisexual, 3% migrant workers and 3% for ex-offenders
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5.6 Themes of Grants

1. There were 19% of grants allocated to projects around arts and culture
 2. 18% to health and wellbeing
 3. 17% for community support
 4. 10% for social inclusion
 5. 7% for counselling and 7 % for education / training
 6. 5% for environment and 5% for anti-social behaviour
 7. 3% for disabled sports / activities
 8. 2% for remembrance armed forces
 9. 2% for volunteering
 10. 2% supporting family life
 11. 2% social enterprise
 12. 1% other
- Some examples of projects funded using Community Fund Grants include drama sessions for young people, village hall stage and sound system improvement, vintage and craft fair and counselling services.
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5.7 Community Grant Fund Expenditure

- In 2015 – 2016 = £7,250.00 was awarded
- In 2016 – 2017 = £7,136.00 was awarded
- In 2017 – 2018 = £7,000.00 was awarded

6.0 Facilities Improvement Grants

6.1 Purpose of Facilities Improvement Grants

The purpose of the Facilities Improvement grants is to develop and improve village halls, community centres, sport and leisure centres, play facilities and public open spaces, protecting and enhancing the quality of life for residents within East Cambridgeshire.

Facilities Improvement Grants Outcomes

- Over the past 3 years, there were 10 parishes that benefitted from the Facilities Improvement Grant. Reach was successful in securing 4 grants, Stetchworth 2 grants, Ely 2 grants and Little Thetford 2 grants.

6.2 Location of Parishes

- 28 % of all parishes benefitted from Facilities Improvement Grant funding between 2015 - 18.

Location of Parishes

1. 29% to Reach Parish Council
2. 15% to Ely
3. 7% to Soham, Chippenham, Mepal, Littleport, Kentford and Kennett, Stetchworth, Little Thetford and Witcham

6.3 Type of Organisations

1. 64% awarded to Parish Councils
2. 22% awarded to charities
3. 14% awarded to other e.g. company limited by guarantee and industrial or provident society

6.4 Type of Facility

- The grants were spread between community centres, multi- purpose sports and leisure centres, village halls, play spaces and open spaces.
- 35% to community centres
- 18% to play facilities
- 18% village halls

- 17% multi purpose sports and leisure centres
 - 12% to open spaces
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6.5 Facilities Improvement Grant Expenditure

- In 2015 / 16 = £44,702.00 was awarded
- In 2016 / 17 = £36,000.00 was awarded
- In 2017 / 18 = £36,322.00 was awarded

Expenditure Total = £117,024.00

7.0 S106 Grants

7.1 Purpose of Section 106

The purpose of the Section 106 grant is to:

- Upgrade community centres/village halls which are the main community centre in a village and which are available for anyone in the community to use. Build a new facility, extend or refurbish an existing facility or provision of disabled facility within a multi-purpose sports and leisure centre which serves the general public, build or substantially refurbish play areas, teenage zones, skateboard facilities and similar.

The grant is available to parish councils and community groups for the purchase or leasing of land for new formal / informal public open space, recreation and allotments, improve existing open spaces such as improving access, education or other facilities.

7.2 Section 106 Outcomes

- The highest percentage of Section 106 monies were spent in Ely, 32% followed by Sutton, 16%.
- There were 14 parishes in receipt of Section 106 monies between 2015 - 2018.
 1. 32%, 8 grants received by Ely of Ely Council
 2. 16%, 4 grants received by Sutton Parish Council
 3. 8%, 2 grants received by Bottisham Parish Council
 4. 4% and 1 grant received by Little Downham,
 5. 4% and 1 grant received by Burwell
 6. 4% and 1 grant received by Littleport

7. 4% and 1 grant received by Haddenham
 8. 4% and 1 grant received by Wicken
 9. 4% and 1 grant received by Stretham,
 10. 4% and 1 grant received by Stetchworth
 11. 4% and 1 grant received by Mepal
 12. 4% and 1 grant received by Cheveley
 13. 4% and 1 grant received by Lode
 14. 4% and 1 grant received by Prickwillow Parish Council
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7.3 Types of Organisations Awarded

- There were 18 grants awarded to parish councils, (69%), 3 grants (11%) awarded to charitable trusts, 2 grants, (8%) equally awarded to the parochial church and company limited by guarantee and 1 grant awarded to membership organisation, 4%.

1. 69%, 18 grants were awarded to parish councils
 2. 11%, 3 grants were awarded to charitable trusts
 3. 8%, 2 grants were awarded to parochial church
 4. 8%, 2 grants were awarded to company limited by guarantee
 5. 4%, 1 grant was awarded to membership organisation
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7.4 Details of Project

1. 36% grants were awarded to community space projects, e.g. installing power, fencing, dog bins and defibrillators.
 2. 28% of grants were awarded to community sports/ activity centre improvements.
 3. 16% awarded to improving facilities within village halls.
 4. 12% awarded to a community garden
 5. 8% awarded to traffic calming
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7.5 Type of Facility that benefitted

1. 39% of the grants were awarded to open spaces
 2. 31% awarded to community centres and village halls
 3. 15% awarded to play facilities
 4. 15% awarded to multi -purpose sports and leisure centres.
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7.6 **S106 Expenditure**

- In 2015/16 = £83,182.00 was awarded
- In 2016/17 = £229,927.00 was awarded
- In 2017/18 = £80,032.00 was awarded

Total = £393,141.00 for financial years 2015 - 2018

7.7 Map below shows the geographical spread of the 3 different community grant pots between 2015 – 2018.

7:7

8.0 ARGUMENTS/OPTIONS

8.1 **Options Appraisal**

This section contains options that the Council could adopt moving forward to ensure the aims of this review are achieved.

Option 1	
Maintain the status quo	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>1.1 Processes already in place. Less officer time spent with implementing new processes.</p>	<p>2.1 Uneven distribution of money, more grants have been given to north and western regions of East Cambridgeshire as well as in and around Ely. Less projects happening in the southern part of East Cambridgeshire meaning less beneficiaries in these areas.</p> <p>2.2 No closing date in place for applications throughout the year which means that the applicants are less able to structure their timings to apply for grants.</p> <p>2.3 Continuation of repeat applications for reoccurring groups for the Community Grant Fund.</p> <p>2.4 Grants being carried over into the next financial year. The applications had not been followed through in the progress reports.</p> <p>2.5 Lack of knowledge of grants in general, low profile. The aim is to raise the profile through the Parish Conference and through 6 monthly emails to all parishes.</p> <p>2.6 Lack of variety of applications with some of the grant pots.</p> <p>2.7 Inability to organise the grant applications throughout the year, due to no publicised dates for applications to be received by, this reiterates point 2.2.</p>

8.2

Option 2	
Revised award criteria (in 2019/20)	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>3.1 Opportunity to introduce closing dates for the Community Fund Grant so that grants can be assessed at the same time which will ensure the highest scoring applications will succeed. Suggestion is to implement two closing dates per year with the Community Grant Fund.</p> <p>3.2 With the implementation of two closing dates per year the grants will be received throughout the year and staggered, rather than all at once (applicable to Community Fund Grant), allowing the grant officer(s) the ability to manage the workload more effectively.</p> <p>3.3 By introducing point 3.1. – 3.3 this allows the possibility for a wider variety of applications to be forthcoming to ECDC, both in the type of grants and the geographical spread as at present the Community Grant Fund is experiencing repeat applications from the same groups and these are being dealt with shortly into the new financial year. Applicants will be better able to organise their time to write the applications. 5 applications turned away due to all funds being allocated to successful applications, if applications are received at the same time, then this allows a system whereby the highest scoring bids will be successful. This will mean a decrease in some of the repeat</p>	<p>4.1 New processes to be put in place, more officer time to update forms and website.</p>

<p>applications, therefore this leaves the potential for more variety of bids being successful, both geographically and their content.</p> <p>3.4 Reporting and final claim forms will have clearer guidelines as to what is required.</p>	
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Option 3	
Decrease funding using revised award criteria (in 2019/20)	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>5.1 ECDC resources (e.g. staff time) can focus on other areas of work</p>	<p>6.1 More time spent assisting applicants explore external funding bodies resulting in increased officer time.</p> <p>6.2 Less applications put forward in general. Sometimes the external bids are difficult to write and very time consuming, more support from the Parish Council required.</p> <p>6.3 Decrease in applications, therefore less monies available to improve all facilities that currently experience refurbishment and upgrades.</p> <p>6.4 Less facilities and projects being delivered to East Cambridgeshire</p>

8.4

Option 4	
Increase funding using revised award criteria (in 2019/20)	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>7.1 Able to process more applications, particularly the Community Grant Fund which was oversubscribed in this</p>	<p>8.1 Additional ECDC resources required (money, officer time).</p>

<p>current year (2018 – 2019) by 5 applications. (This resulted in less projects being able to be delivered across East Cambridgeshire and less beneficiaries.)</p> <p>7.2 Wider variety of applications, meaning more variety of projects across East Cambs received</p> <p>7.3 More opportunities for small parishes and communities to secure funding to meet their needs.</p>	
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9.0 Conclusion

9:1 After a review of the options and the link to the corporate priorities, past expenditure and future expectations it is recommended that Committee approves Option 2.

The table below sets out how the Council will improve the effectiveness of grants to meet the needs of communities, as identified in the ECDC Grants Review 2018/19:

9.2

Area of Focus	Action
Raise Profile of Grants	Develop a Communications Plan with the aim of raising awareness of community grants to the wider community including harder to reach groups.
Help and Support for Applicants	Review and promote guidance and support available to applicants.
Procedures and Criteria	<p>Review award criteria and associated scoring systems to ensure that all information requested is available to fairly and comprehensively assess applications.</p> <p>Introduce report / final claim forms, with clear guidelines as to what is required from applicants.</p> <p>Introduce application windows for grants to be submitted and assessed with monies awarded to communities most in need.</p> <p>Amend evidence of need and outcome of works criteria .e.g. photographs of completed works</p>

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 The financial implications will remain the same.

10.2 EIA is provided at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively

11.0 APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Equality Impact Assessment

11.2 Appendix 2 – Full Equality Impact Assessment

Background Documents	Location	Contact Officer
Draft Equality Impact Assessment	Council Chambers, The Grange	Michelle Burrell-Barnett Communities and Partnerships Support Officer (01353) 665555 E-mail: michelle.burrell-barnett@eastCambridgeshire.gov.uk