

Management Committee

15 August 2017

Council Support to Community & Voluntary Groups in the Borough

For Decision

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder

Cllr Christine James, Social Inclusion Briefholder

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

Jane Nicklen, Community Planning & Development Manager

Statutory Authority

The Localism Act, 2011, Section 137 of Local Government Act, 1972 and any other relevant statutory powers as applicable to specific grant provision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To agree the amount of council support to community and voluntary groups in the 2017-18 financial year and the system for allocating the grant scheme.

Officer Recommendations

- 2 (a) That members approve the allocation of a community and voluntary grants fund of £50,000 for distribution in 2017-18, to be funded from reserves already allocated **in principle** for once off projects.
(b) That the Corporate Manager, Planning (Community Policy & Development) is delegated to determine grants in line with the agreed corporate and community priorities and in consultation with appropriate ward members and Brief-holders.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To enable the council to recognise the value of community work and volunteering in the Borough and to promote this through a one year grant fund with awards based on agreed local priorities.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

4. At April Committee this year, members heard that the community and voluntary sector in the Borough of Weymouth and Portland supports a wide range of differing groups and organisations that bring skills, energy and enthusiasm to local activities and projects. The sector covers numerous areas of interest including:
 - Economy and tourism
 - Health and wellbeing and social support
 - Community safety
 - Environmental work
 - Sports
 - Arts and culture
 - “Friends of” groups
 - Uniformed groups
 - Church-run community groups and organisations such as food banks
 - Veterans
 - Child and Youth groups
5. The council’s finances have not previously permitted a grants scheme for the community and voluntary sector in the Borough although certain organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau receive annual support and rent subsidies are provided to organisations such as MV Freedom, Portland Museum, The Islanders (Youth) Club, Weymouth Angling Club and Weymouth Pavilion. The latter also received a capital grant for roof repairs at March 2017 Management Committee.
6. In the past few months, this committee has also agreed a number of recommendations relating to grants policy and process. These have included:
 - i. the creation of a community and voluntary organisation one year grant fund and a launch event for the grants fund - (approved, April 2017),
 - ii. an open grant process as used in 2014 to allocate Working with You funding for priority areas of the Borough - (approved, April 2017)
 - iii. a revision of the Council’s Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy including a set of evidenced based community priorities – (approved July 2017)
7. The opportunity therefore exists to consider the creation of a new, short-term grants fund with awards made on the basis of the revised Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy and within the framework of an agreed set of evidence-based local priorities.
8. It is proposed that the scheme will be open to all Weymouth and Portland-based community and voluntary groups by formal application. The scheme could be advertised through the local press, by officers and through existing community networks such as the Dorset Community Action mailing list. It is suggested that applications be invited for themed categories that

are linked to local priorities and will be assessed on the outcomes their funded activity or project delivers against these priorities.

Officers successfully used a similar scheme for two rounds of Working with You funding allocated from Narrowing the Gap reserves in 2013-14. This went to groups operating in the four priority areas of the Borough, Littlemoor, Melcombe Regis, Underhill and Westham.

9. The grant decisions will be informed by Corporate and Community Priorities, the latter being informed by a range of evidence of local need.

Weymouth and Portland Borough Council Corporate Priorities:

Building a Stronger Local Economy

- Helping to stimulate economic growth so that the borough offers better jobs and prospects for local people
- Increasing the number of new homes built within the borough

Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities

- Building strong, inclusive and sustainable communities that empower local people to influence and provide the services that matter most to them
- Supporting vulnerable people so that they can live healthy and independent lives

Improving Quality of Life

- Enhancing the quality of life of people living and working in the borough
- Safeguarding and providing opportunities to enjoy the natural and built environment now and in the future

Developing Successful Partnerships

- Creating a leaner and more focused organisation to protect the delivery of local services
- Services that are shaped and focused on the needs of our customers
- Partnerships that give the county a stronger voice to influence and shape Dorset's prosperity

Weymouth and Portland Draft Community Priorities

Approved by 11 July 2017 Management Committee:

1. Supporting our Young People
2. Supporting our Older People
3. Supporting our Vulnerable People
4. Supporting Health and Wellbeing
5. Supporting Safer Communities
6. Supporting our Natural Environment

Implications

10. Corporate Plan

This report has implications for all priorities in the Corporate Plan

11. Financial

The proposed grants scheme will be funded from reserves already set aside for once off projects. If agreed, this will result in less resources being available for other schemes and projects. The use of this funding will result in a reduction of investment income of approximately £2,000 per annum.

12. Equalities

The allocation of financial assistance provides the potential for positive impact in relation to local people with protected characteristics under The Equality Act, 2010.

13. Environmental

The allocation of financial assistance provides the potential for positive impact in relation to environmental projects in the Borough.

14. Economic Development

The allocation of financial assistance provides the potential for positive impact in relation to economic development.

15. Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

The management of grants, loans and subsidies under the proposed policy requires all recipients to sign an agreement and agree to supply a monitoring report relating to their grant. This minimises risks to the council and provides proof of due diligence on the case of audit.

16. Human Resources

Work relating to this report will be undertaken within existing staff resources.

Consultation and Engagement

17. The proposals in this report have been discussed in detail with officers with working knowledge of the community & voluntary sector and members with experience of grants, loans and subsidies.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

WPBC Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy, 2017

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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