

Management Committee

14th August 2018

Award of grants to community groups and projects

For Decision

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Kate Wheller – Community Facilities

Cllr John Orrell – Social Inclusion

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Stephen Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

T. Hurley, Leisure Commissioning Manager

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 present to the committee proposals for the award of grant funding to community groups and to suspend aspects of the council's Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy.

Officer Recommendations

2. That Management Committee:
 - a) awards a one-off grant of up to £25,000 to the Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation (registered charity no. 1153060) as a contribution towards the cost of constructing a new sailing centre (planning permission ref. WP/18/00555/NMA);
 - b) awards a one-off grant of up to £20,000 to the Friends of Castle Cove Beach Charity (registered charity no. 1168204) as a contribution towards the cost of installing new steps to facilitate public access to Castle Cove beach (planning application ref. WP/17/01011/FUL);
 - c) awards a one-off grant of £6,500 to the Sutton Poyntz Society as a contribution towards the cost of a pond restoration project in Sutton Poyntz;

- d) awards a one-off grant of £7,000 to Let's Make It Community Group to create new community murals in three of the town underpasses.
- e) gives delegated authority to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the relevant briefholder, to agree the terms of the grant agreements should the committee agree to award the grants as recommended in 2 (a), (b), (c) and (d);
- f) that the provisions in Clause 4.7 of the council's Discretionary Grants, Loans & Subsidies Policy that requires all grants over £2,000 to be approved by Management Committee be suspended until 31st March 2019 to enable senior officers to allocate funding to support community projects within agreed budgets and following consultation with the relevant briefholder/s.

Reason for Decision

- 3. To assist the timely allocation of grants during the current financial year in support of a range of community organisations and projects in the Borough.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4. This report presents to the Committee four requests for grant funding, received recently by the council from community groups. The report also proposes the suspension of Clause 4.7 of the council's Discretionary Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy which requires all grants over £2,000 to be agreed by Management Committee. This will enable timely allocation of grants following the necessary governance checks and consultation with briefholders.

a) Grant to Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation

- 5. The Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation has been operating at the Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy (W&PNSA) since 2014 and provides affordable sailing opportunities for young people. It also provides sessions for disabled sailors in partnership with the Chesil Trust. Each year, approximately 1,500 young people take part in the *Rob Shipley Sail for £5* programme offered by the Foundation.
- 6. The Foundation is now proposing to create a bespoke clubhouse adjacent to the W&PNSA, with disabled access and indoor training facilities. The project is estimated to cost £187,147 (including VAT) and to date the Foundation has raised £162,147 – including a grant of £50,000 from Sport England. The Foundation has, therefore, submitted a request to the borough council for a £25,000 grant to meet the project's funding shortfall.
- 7. It is recommended, therefore, that the council offers the Foundation a grant of up to £25,000 to complete the funding needed to undertake the project. However, as the Foundation may be able to claim back a proportion of the VAT, it may not be necessary for the council to release all of any grant awarded. Officers will, therefore, request budget updates from the Foundation as the project progresses in to assess its financial requirements.

b) Grant to Friends of Castle Cove Beach

8. The Friends of Castle Cove Beach are a registered charity which works to enable free public access to Castle Cove beach via footpaths and steps following a landslip which caused the loss of access. The charity has now secured planning permission to install wooden steps and has requested a grant of £20,000 from the borough council as a contribution to the cost of installing the new steps.
9. It is recommended that a grant of up to £20,000 is awarded to this project and officers will request updates on the construction costs to establish what proportion of the grant is required.

c) Grant to The Sutton Poyntz Society

10. The Sutton Poyntz Society is a constituted body with the aim of protecting and preserving the village. The village pond through which the River Jordan flows is at the heart of village life and is the venue for many village events and a point of interest for visitors.
11. It is recommended that a grant of £6,500 is awarded to the Sutton Poyntz Society to enable it to undertake clearance and restoration of the village pond in Sutton Poyntz.

e) Grant to Let's Make It Community Group

12. Westham Community Group is a constituted group with a track record of community-based projects which include the original murals in the Westham underpass.
13. It is recommended that funding of £7,000 is provided to Westham Community Group to tackle three unsightly underpasses - the small underpass by Radipole lake that leads from the Swannery car park to the Westham town bridge, the King Street Underpass and the Westham underpass. The project involves creation of new artworks in these areas with a view to reducing graffiti. Headed up by Westham Community Group, the partnership delivering this project includes East Boro and Aster Housing Associations, Let's Make It, WeyProgress social media group, the council's Community Development Team and local volunteers including adults with learning disabilities.

f) Proposal to change the council's Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy

14. The council has historically provided limited support to the community and voluntary sector in the Borough. All grants, loans and subsidies are currently subject to the provisions of the council's Discretionary Grants Loans & Subsidies Policy which was approved at Management Committee in July 2017, (Minute 33 of July 2017 refers.). Under Clause 4.7 of the policy, any grant, loan or subsidy below £2,000 is covered under officer delegation with grants, loans and subsidies over £2,000 requiring Management Committee approval.
15. Whilst this system has worked under normal circumstances there is now a need to consider relaxing the £2,000 level for officer delegation to allow expedient payments in the run up to Local Government Re-organisation.

The need to take every grant over £2,000 to committee will slow down the process of payment to such an extent that officers were asked to prepare this report proposing relaxation of this element of the policy.

16. It is not proposed to relax any of the other requirements of the existing Discretionary Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy and applicants will still be required to satisfy the governance requirements of the policy so that due process is followed.

Implications

17. **Corporate Plan.** The project relates to the following Corporate Plan objective: *Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities*.
18. **Financial.** All the grant allocations recommended in this report can be accommodated within existing budgets.
19. **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.
20. **Economic Development.** Through its support for community projects that involve the creation of new facilities, the council can assist the local construction sector.
21. **Risk Management (including Health & Safety).** The most significant risks that the council faces is that of financial risk. This will be managed by the use of grant agreements and the release of grants in appropriate tranches.

Consultation and Engagement

22. Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant Brief Holders and with group leaders.

Background Papers

23. Weymouth & Portland Borough Council's Discretionary Grants, Loans & Subsidies Policy agreed by WPBC Management Committee, July 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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