

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

26 NOVEMBER 2020

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| Report Title | COMMUNITY RESILIENCE & WELLBEING GRANT |
| Purpose of Report | To approve revised Community Recovery & Wellbeing Grant criteria and decision making process. |
| Decision(s) | The Committee RESOLVES to adopt the new Community Recovery & Wellbeing Grant process. |
| Consultation and Feedback | <p>In the preparation of this report consultation has taken place with elected members and stakeholders. The feedback has been positive and all agree that the existing Community Investment Grant needs to be brought in line with current Stroud District Council (SDC) objectives.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed consultation and development briefings with the Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee and leaders of the political groups and through these channels with other elected members. • The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) by a district wide survey delivered via the Stroud District Know Your Patch network. • A targeted survey to previous recipients of the SDC Community Investment Grants. • The survey was distributed to 230 VCS organisations across the district with 32 responses • Gloucestershire Rural Community Council who offer funding advice and support to the VCS as part of an SLA with SDC. <p>A breakdown of the VCS consultation feedback is provided in Appendix A</p> |
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| Options | None |
| Background Papers | None |

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|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------|---------------|
| Appendices | Appendix A: Grant Review VCS Consultation Feedback Appendix B: Community Resilience and Wellbeing Work Stream Brief Appendix C: Organisations Funded by Community Investment Grant in 2020/21 | | | |
| Implications (further details at the end of the report) | Financial | Legal | Equality | Environmental |
| | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

1.1 Scope of review

This report reviews the grant criteria and decision making process for Community Investment Grant funding. Current criteria have been in place for a number of years. To ensure grants are being fairly distributed and can be properly monitored, a review has been planned for some time. The particular conditions association with Covid-19 and the significance of community resilience emphasise the importance of appropriately targeted community sector support built on criteria which meet contemporary needs.

2. MAIN POINTS

2.1 Review of the Current Scheme

In 2020/21 the existing SDC Community Investment Grant funded 32 organisations to a total of £300,000.

It is important that any grant award scheme is fit for purpose. Although the current scheme has successfully supported voluntary and community sector groups from across the district for a number of years in order that it can remain effective its promotion, award criteria and monitoring process must be appropriate and any areas of weakness in the current approach strengthened. This includes:

- Ensuring the scheme is equitably throughout the district;
- There are efficient and transparent application and decision making processes
- Monitoring arrangements ensure award objectives are met
- Revised criteria not aligned to current SDC Community Recovery objectives
- The decision making criteria recognise applicants' ability to deliver value for money

2.2 Recommended Changes

It is proposed that the existing Community Investment Grant Scheme criteria is revised to align with SDC's Community Resilience and Wellbeing Work Stream Brief. The name will change to Community Resilience and Wellbeing Grant to reflect this.

The existing criteria, have been developed over a number of years and established to meet the needs of community groups and those they served at the time. They have been in place since 2013.

Although appropriate at their inception they now do not encourage applicants to specifically work towards or contribute to existing Corporate Development Plans objectives. They do not provide a coherent or consistent framework for monitoring success that is aligned to wider community targets or objectives.

As a consequence of this, support for both applicants and grant recipients has often been inconsistent. It has created an environment where monitoring has been focused singularly on financial propriety, which while obviously important has meant community benefit, sustainability and value for money have been difficult to assess.

Similarly, opportunities for collaboration between recipients with shared or common goals have been missed.

The review of the criteria against a clear community resilience and recovery framework is intended to address these weaknesses.

The proposed revised criteria are based on the Community Resilience and Wellbeing Delivery plan (see Appendix B) and are designed to provide a clear, consistent evaluation framework aligned to this. This has been informed by direct feedback from Stroud's voluntary and community sector and by current grant recipients.

2.2.1 Assessment and evaluation criteria

Grant applications will be assessed based on the proposed following 10 criteria. The applicant's ability to demonstrate how it is able to meet the requirements of the criteria will in each case be scored out of 10, with a total score out of a 100.

Proposed Criteria

The applicant is able to demonstrate:

| Ref | Criteria |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | You demonstrate that you are a well-developed Community Hub where voluntary and statutory services and local people can respond to community needs. |
| 2 | You empower individuals and community groups to make change in their own community and feel confident about doing it. |
| 3 | You recognise and respond to the challenges facing those in protected characteristic groups, such as learning from the Black Lives Matter campaign. |
| 4 | You support people to connect, come together and support one another online or face to face (outdoors or indoors). |
| 5 | You support people to be aware of and access support for mental health, wellbeing, financial and social issues from the statutory and community sectors. |
| 6 | You support inactive people to become more physically active. |

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| 7 | You provide genuinely accessible opportunities in one or more of these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving wellbeing • Being physically active • Engaging with heritage • Engaging in arts • Undertaking cultural activities • Understanding or tackling Climate Challenge |
| 8 | You demonstrate value for money through Match funding from other sources either financial or in kind. |
| 9 | You demonstrate value for money through the number of people you support. |
| 10 | You demonstrate value for money through the number of people you support with complex issues |

| The application demonstrates how it meets the | Judgement | Score |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|
| Meets or exceeds the standard | Excellent | 9-10 |
| Meets the standard but does not exceed it | Good | 7-8 |
| Meets the standard in some areas but not in all | Satisfactory | 5-6 |
| Fails to meet the standards in the majority of | Unsatisfactory | 3-4 |
| Significantly fails to meet the standard | Poor | 1-2 |
| Completely fails to meet the standard | Failed | 0 |

2.2.2 Assessment panel

It is proposed that an officer grant assessment panel will evaluate each application against the ten criteria and recommend a grant award based on the application strength and the request award amount, taking into account value for money.

The final award decision will be through the Chair of CS&L Committee and reported through that Committee.

2.2.3 Grant budget and award period

It is not proposed that the total grant amount is reduced from the current budget. The funding period will be for one year. Future funding periods will be decided alongside budget discussions.

2.2.4 Citizen's Advice Bureau

It is recommended that the Citizen's Advice Bureau portion of the current Community Investment Grant be dealt with separately to the rest of the grant awards. The CAB are given a large portion of the total grants budget and perform a complex and essential function for the Council. The CAB should be funded the new Community Grants for 21/22 as usual but then funding should be gradually transitioned to a Service Level Agreement with expectations and

monitoring more appropriate to size and importance of their activities. This should be done in partnership with the CAB, with their agreement and with support from SDC Officers.

2.2.5 Current Awards Recipients

Appendix C shows a list of organisations who are supported by the current Community Investment Grant. It is anticipated that some of these organisations will not meet the new Community Resilience and Wellbeing Grant criteria. SDC officers will work with current recipients well in advance of the new grant scheme launch to enable them to seek advice about alternative grant funding if appropriate. Those organisations will be encouraged to use the new Community Lottery as a means to fundraise locally and offered guidance by GRCC.

2.2.7 Advice and support to applicants

Officers will support organisations both in the application process and in seeking alternative funding routes if required. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council will also offer guidance to community organisations as part of the SLA they hold with SDC. SDC will supply example application answers via the website or on paper to help organisations understand what a 'good' application looks like.

2.2.8 Promotion of the revised grant scheme

It is proposed that new scheme is promoted through a number of channels:

- Elected Member through ward networks. Elected members will be encouraging community groups and organisations to approach SDC for advice and support about the funding process. Member knowledge about who is working effectively on the ground will be crucial to this
- SDC voluntary and community sector network (Know Your Patch Network)
- SDC website.
- GRCC through their Parish and Town Council network.

2.3 Supporting sustainable Community Hubs

SDC is leading a parallel project to support the development of Community Hubs across the district. This will provide mentoring and training to help grassroots neighbourhood groups develop into Community Hubs serving a variety of community needs. This is a long term project that has been fast tracked in response to the wealth of community groups who provided COVID-19 support throughout the pandemic. Some of these groups who wish to develop into more sustainable, formalised Community Hubs will be able to apply for the new Community Resilience and Wellbeing Grant.

There will also be a package of support and mentoring available to them from SDC officers, voluntary, health and care partners.

2.4 Timeline from Review to Launch

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| Recommendations to CS&L Committee | 26 th November |
| Launch and promote new grant | 10 th December |
| Example of 'good' applications uploaded to SDC website | 10 th December |

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|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Grant workshops for Community Organisations | 11 th & 18 th January |
| Grant Application Deadline | 31 st January |
| First funding panel sits | 7 th February |
| Recommended awards to Chair of CS&L for approval | 10 th February |
| Final grant decisions | 28 th February |
| Feedback on first panel to CS&L Chair | 25 th March |
| Payments to Community Organisations | 1 st April |

3. CONCLUSION

This report recommends that the Committee approve the new criteria and decision making process to enable launch of the new scheme in December 2021. As the Covid-19 pandemic continues, community organisations are providing essential support for residents and others are losing income during lockdown. It is time critical that SDC introduce a fairer and more efficient process to enable community funding to be allocated as early as possible.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

- 4.1.1 The existing budget for the Community Grants Scheme is £307k. As per Paragraph 2.1 £300k is considered for inclusion in the grant scheme with the balance being used to explore a software solution to support grant funding.
- 4.1.2 Included within this sum is £20k per annum for Kingshill House. This is considered separately in the Medium Term Financial Plan and will be the subject of a report to Strategy and Resources Committee. It will therefore not form part of the Community Resilience and Wellbeing Grant scheme.
- 4.1.3 The payment to the Citizens Advice Bureau (£125k per annum) is also not included as part of the new grant scheme as per paragraph 2.2.4.
- 4.1.4 The final budget for the new grant scheme is therefore £155k per year which is included in the base budget for this committee for the 2021/22 year
- 4.1.5 Any payments to existing grant applicants as part of an adjustment process to the new allocation will come from this budget
- 4.1.6 The budget will be reviewed after the first year of operation. Money received from the General Good Causes Fund from the new Community Lottery (“Lucky Severn”) will be used towards the Community Resilience and Wellbeing Grant Scheme.

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4.2 Legal Implications

The Council has a wide variety of statutory powers to award grants to voluntary and community groups. The proposed criteria and process to be adopted by the Council will demonstrate that decisions to award grants are taken in a fair and transparent manner. Also, the written documentation of the award ensures that a successful organisation understands their obligations and the terms upon which the grant has been awarded.

One Legal

Tel: 01684 272691 Email: legal.services@tewkesbury.gov.uk

4.3 Equality Implications

The grant process has been re-designed in order to make the funding more accessible to a wider range of organisations who are working with vulnerable people or people of protected characteristics. The new criteria are written to enable more equitable spending across the district and reach people who are currently less likely to access funding. The support put in place from SDC officers and GRCC will enable groups who do not have the online abilities or grant writing skills to access the funding. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will be available on the website.

4.4 Environmental Implications

The new grant process prioritises projects helping to tackle the climate challenge in the hope that community groups doing this work will be better supported by SDC in the future.

Appendix B. Community Resilience and Wellbeing Work Stream Brief August 2020

Community Resilience and Wellbeing Work Stream Brief August 2020

Objectives and Partnership Commitments

Objectives

1. Individuals and communities are empowered to make change in their own community and feel confident about doing it.
2. People are connected and able to support one another both online and face to face.
3. People are more physically active.
4. People are aware of and can access mental health support services from statutory and community sector.
5. Our Leisure & Culture Service providers support recovery by providing genuinely accessible opportunities for all.
6. Voluntary and community sector groups are valued, enabled and empowered to deliver local change through training, support and co-production.
7. All tiers of local administration (County, District and Parish and Town Councils) are integrated into the recovery effort by collaborative action planning.
8. Strong and effective partnerships exist with countywide statutory bodies (Public Health England, police/fire and rescue service, adult social care, children and education services, Community Safety Partnership).

Our Commitment:

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Working in partnership we will

1. Enable people to safely and easily access places to meet, be active, be in nature and enjoy culture and heritage no matter their background.
2. Improve access to support for wellbeing, financial and social issues.
3. Create opportunities where people feel confident about contributing to their communities.
4. Support community organisations operationally and financially to respond to the needs of their communities.
5. Support the delivery of well-developed Community Hubs for every locality, a place where the voluntary and statutory services and local people can respond to each community's needs.
6. Working in partnership we recognise that monetary issues have a key impact on mental health and wellbeing and will support work to address this and its effects.
7. Recognise and respond to the challenges facing those in protected characteristic groups and learning from the Black Lives Matter campaign.

Appendix C. Organisations Funded by Community Investment Grant in 2020/21

| Organisation | Funding Per Annum | Funding Paid to Date | 1st Instalment | 2nd Instalment |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Active Impact | £4,500.00 | £4,500.00 | Y | Y |
| All Pulling Together | £5,000.00 | £5,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Allsorts | £7,000.00 | £7,000.00 | Y | Y |
| CAB | £125,000.00 | £62,500.00 | Y | N |
| Down to Earth | £1,500.00 | £1,500.00 | Y | Y |
| Dursley & District Community Association | £2,000.00 | £2,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Fair Shares Gloucester | £4,000.00 | £4,000.00 | Y | Y |
| GL11 Community Hub | £2,000.00 | £1,000.00 | Y | N |
| GOPA | £4,500.00 | £2,250.00 | Y | N |
| Homestart | £7,000.00 | £7,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Kingshill House | £20,000.00 | £20,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Lansdown Hall & Gallery | £5,000.00 | £5,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Listening Post | £2,000.00 | £2,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Marah Trust | £2,000.00 | £2,000.00 | Y | Y |
| PREMA | £5,000.00 | £5,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Shire Training Workshops T/A Openhouse | £5,000.00 | £5,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Stroud Beresford Group | £16,000.00 | £16,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Stroud District Basics Bank (Operating as Stroud District Foodbank & Stroud District Kid's Stuff) | £8,000.00 | £8,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Stroud Fringe | £1,500.00 | £0.00 | N | N |
| Stroud International Textiles | £1,500.00 | £1,500.00 | Y | Y |
| Stroud Valleys Artspace | £5,000.00 | £2,500.00 | Y | N |
| Stroud Valleys Project | £9,500.00 | £4,750.00 | Y | N |
| The Door Youth Project | £8,000.00 | £8,000.00 | Y | Y |
| The Edge | £7,000.00 | £7,000.00 | Y | Y |
| The Grace Network | £2,000.00 | £2,000.00 | Y | Y |
| The Nelson Trust | £7,000.00 | £7,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Transition Stroud | £2,000.00 | £2,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Trust In You | £1,500.00 | £750.00 | Y | N |
| Uplands Care Service/Lilian Faithfull Care | £4,000.00 | £4,000.00 | Y | Y |
| Under The Edge Arts | £2,500.00 | £2,500.00 | Y | Y |
| Woodchester Mansion | £18,500.00 | £18,500.00 | Y | Y |
| World Jungle | £4,500.00 | £2,250.00 | Y | N |
| | £300,000.00 | £222,500.00 | | |