

Thursday, 29 July 2021

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Waste

Tamworth Community Grants Process

Exempt Information

None

Purpose

To approve a revised criteria and process for Tamworth Community Grants and Start Up Business Grants 2021/22

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The allocation of £9,000 be made available for Ward members grant funding for community groups delegated for decision by the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Waste and Executive Director Communities
2. An allocation of £18,590 continue to be made available for wider Tamworth community grant funding against existing criteria and agreed through the new Nominations and Grants Committee (subject to approval of revised Constitution)
3. The maximum fund allocations for the Community grants is raised to £1,000 per application
4. The Nominations and Grants Committee approve the award of the existing Tamworth Start up Business Grants
5. Allocations for all grant to be made quarterly commencing September 2021
6. A permanent central Community grants budget is created within the Partnerships directorate incorporating Voluntary/Sports and Arts grants

Executive Summary

During the Covid pandemic, the voluntary sector in Tamworth has responded significantly to the challenges faced and has done this through countless volunteers and community goodwill. The Council recognise those successes and would like to continue to promote grant funding to our voluntary and community groups to aid recovery, assist those most vulnerable and promote ongoing social action, especially at ward level.

In November 2020 Cabinet approved the allocation of £27,590 for a central partnerships budget to be for use as community grant funding from 2021/22.

The budget combined the Arts, Sports and Voluntary sector grants into funding pot with the agreed criteria for award aligned to corporate priorities:-

- To assist community recovery and resilience from the Covid-19 pandemic
- To help tackle the causes of inequality in our communities
- To help develop and safeguard our environment and open spaces
- To increase opportunities to participate in arts, heritage and sports activities
- Increase volunteering and civic pride
- Help tackle causes and effects of poverty and financial hardship

- Consider outstanding individuals or groups who by achievement in arts, culture or sports support and promote Tamworth as a place
- Promotes and develops community cohesion

The report also agreed that the process for grants would be reviewed.

Following consultation with Members and the Leader of the Council the following has been proposed:

- An allocation of £18,590 to be made available for Community grants which meet above criteria and by general application during 2021/22 – allocated in September and December 2021 and March 2022
- Approval for Community Grants to be delegated to the updated Nominations and Grants Committee (subject to update of the Constitution).
- Raising of maximum threshold for the award grant to £1,000 for community groups
- Approval for the Start Up Business Grants to be delegated to the same group
- An allocation of £9,000 (£900 per ward) to be allocated as Councillor Community Awards in 2020/21. The funding is £300 per Councillor which can be used as an individual grant to voluntary sector groups in their allocated ward or combined as a one off grant of £900.
- Nominated Ward community groups to complete an application form (which must comply with grant conditions) and forwarded to Ward Councillors to support for discussion and agreement with Portfolio Holder Economy and Waste and Executive Director Communities for award

Outline Application forms and criteria for Councillor and Community grants are attached as Appendix 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b.

All further award conditions and performance monitoring to remain as per current process.

It is proposed that application for the Community and Business Start Up grants will commence on Monday 2nd August, closing for the first quarterly award on Friday 3rd September 2021 with further dates to be confirmed in line with Committee dates.

Councillor Community awards will be available all year and subject to allocation.

Options Considered

Do nothing – allocation of grant funding on a wider Tamworth basis remains as per report to Cabinet in November 2020

External delivery of grant funding – this has been considered, but Members are asked to consider that at this time delivery ‘in-house’ is a continued preferred model to promote further Member involvement with communities of Tamworth

Retain ‘in house’ – report highlights preferred option

Finance Implications

Currently the grant budgets are split across three cost centres. £5,000 budget on GX0609 34537, £16,390 on GY0801 34537 and £6,200 on GS1002 31551.

It is recommended that the full year budgets on GX0609 34537 (£5000) and GY0801 34537 (£16390) be permanently vired to GS1002 for this financial year and beyond.

Resource Implications

The process of grant application, award and recording under the Transparency data will continue to be conducted by the existing Partnerships team with promotion through the Corporate PR team

Staff involved in the evaluation of grant submissions will be required to attend or submit report to support or suggest rejection of the funding to the Nominations and Grants Committee for decision (as per previous process)

Legal/Risk Implications Background

RISK	MITIGATION
Grants awarded without prior checks and balances	Grant criteria and conditions must be met before grants are discussed and awarded by Nominations and Grants Committee
Councillor fails to declare interest in group nominated for award	Member interest in Ward or wider community grant awards is documented under Declaration of Interest
Failure to check status of award recipients	Funds are only paid to designated community group bank accounts as per grant criteria
Failure to check that grants have been awarded for purpose outlined in application	All allocated funds will have a performance reporting criteria
Lack of transparency and reporting of grants awarded	All grants awarded are detailed as per requirements for public transparency and detailed on the Council's website

Equalities Implications

All groups are asked to provide safeguarding and appropriate policies
Grant criteria outlines exemptions for funding in line with the Tamworth Borough Council Equalities Policy (MERIT) and under CONTEST Prevent duty

Sustainability Implications

Grant funding will be subject to an annual report to Cabinet to with any underfunding identified and discussed
A further review will be conducted in 2022/23

Background Information

All details covered in the report

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

Cabinet Report 17 November 2020

Appendices

- 1a Councillor Grant form
- 1b Councillor Grant criteria
- 2a Community Grant form
- 2b Community Grant criteria