

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

04 July 2023

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Executive Non Key Decisions

1 **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME**

This report seeks approval of schemes submitted for funding through the Community Development Grant Scheme

1.1 **Background**

1.1.1 On 5 July 2022, Cabinet endorsed the Tonbridge and Malling UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan, which included a total allocation of £165,269 for a community grant scheme. Government approved the Investment Plan in December 2022. The plan set out projects to create a better borough for residents and businesses and this included the Community Development Grant Scheme.

1.1.2 The Scheme will run for the 2023/24 financial year, with a second round in 2024/25. Each year the scheme will operate in the same way, however the allocation of funds for the first year is lower than year two, therefore the amount applicants can apply for will be increased in the second year.

1.2 **Funding Priorities for 2023/24**

1.2.1 A copy of the Application Form, Criteria and Scoring Sheet that was used for Round 1 of the scheme is attached for information at **Annex 1**.

1.2.2 For this financial year, the funding priorities were set as follows:

- A specific project deliverable in the year the grant is awarded
- Projects which are funded from a variety of sources where the Council can provide additional financial support
- Projects which help the Council meet one or more of the priorities set out in the Corporate Strategy
- Projects which address one or more of the following priorities:
 - **Helping vulnerable communities through the cost-of-living crisis**
 - **Supporting healthy lifestyles**
 - **Improving community safety**

- **Helping people gain skills to access the workplace**
- **Supporting environmental and carbon reduction initiatives**

1.3 Round 1 Applications

- 1.3.1 The deadline for applications closed on Friday 16 June 2023. During the 8-week application window, we received 24 applications, 22 of which met the grant criteria guidelines (two were excluded due to incomplete applications and failure to submit the required financial accounts).
- 1.3.2 As anticipated, we were oversubscribed, and the total amount applied for by eligible applicants exceeded the total funding pot for Round 1 of £33,962. Unfortunately, we could not offer all the organisations the full amount that they requested. This meant difficult decisions needed to be made. The following options were considered:
- a) Some applicants do not receive a grant, based on a lower score, the others receive the full amount requested.
 - b) Decrease the amount requested for all applicants.
 - c) Decrease the amount for some applicants based on a scaled allocation, with those achieving higher scores getting the full amount, and those with a lower score against the funding priorities, receiving a lower amount.
- 1.3.3 We felt that option “a” would be unfair to those who completed the application and had submitted a worthwhile bid, but scored lower as they hadn’t demonstrated evidence across all the scoring criteria. Option “b” would have been fairer than “a”, as all applicants would receive some funding, but potentially unfair in restricting the award to the higher scoring applicants for delivering their project, despite meeting multiple funding priorities. Option “c” was therefore chosen as this allowed the full amount to be paid to those applicants who met more of our funding priorities whilst still ensuring all eligible bids received some funding.
- 1.3.4 Using the scoring system set out in the application process, the decision was taken to offer those with a score of above 14 the full amount requested (to a maximum amount of £2,000 as set out in the guidelines). Using this scaled allocation approach, those with a score of 14 or below, have been offered £1,000. 14 was chosen for the scaled allocation point, as this enabled us to distribute most of the money- leaving just £622.
- 1.3.5 The suggested allocations are set out in **Annex 2** of the report, with a further, more detailed summary of the details of each bid and the priorities met, set out in **Annex 3**. Where “Merits” have been listed in **Annex 3**, this relates specifically to the information that applicants themselves have submitted in answer to questions about our funding priorities and objectives.

There has been a wide range of applications that meet our funding priorities. Overall, 15 applicants submitted bids to offer support, advice or equipment for children, young people and their families, 4 applicants submitted bids to support vulnerable adults and low-income families, 2 applicants submitted bids to support environmental goals and 1 applicant submitted a bid for equipment not targeted at a particular sub-group. All applicants were able to prove they will be using the grant to support at least one of the priorities set for this year and in most cases multiple priorities will be met.

- 1.3.6 All applicants were asked during the application process if they were willing to acknowledge the support of the Borough Council with regards to media and publicity. As we have done on previous occasions we would of course, ensure that the Mayor and/or Cabinet Member has the opportunity to present checks and visit some of the schemes in action.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 Applications were assessed against set priorities and scored against set criteria.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The total amount allocated from the UKSPF to the Community Development Grant Scheme is £165,269, split over the two years as follows:

- Round 1 - 2023/24 - £33,962
- Round 2 - 2024/25 - £131,307

- 1.5.2 In Round 1, applicants were able to apply for grants to a maximum of £2,000. This will be increased to grants of up to a maximum of £5,000 in Round 2.

- 1.5.3 Suggested allocations for this financial year are set out in **Annex 2**. If all applicants are agreed as set out in the Annex, there will be a remaining balance of £622. This remaining money can be used to fund the administration costs for the scheme, or used as a contingency fund if Members feel there is a specific bid that they would like to see receiving additional funds. If Members opt to spend the remaining £622 in this round, we will ensure administrative costs are covered during Round 2 (next financial year) in line with UKSPF guidelines.

- 1.5.4 Members will note on the Household Support Fund HSF paper (also presented at this meeting), that there may be some potential overlap between schemes. Members may wish to cross reference some of the bids against suggested HSF allocations.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The application process has been designed to minimise risk, with assessments based on set criteria. Payments will only be made following this process and

upon receipt of audited or signed accounts, along with a copy of the organisation's constitution.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.
- 1.7.2 A number of the initiatives will make a positive contribution in supporting those with protected characteristics.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Biodiversity & Sustainability
- 1.8.2 Climate Change
- 1.8.3 Community
- 1.8.4 Crime & Disorder Reduction
- 1.8.5 Healthy Lifestyles

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That the grant allocations as set out in Annex 2 of the report **BE ENDORSED**.
- 1.9.2 That Members **FURTHER CONSIDER** best use of the remaining £622.

Background papers:

Nil

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