

Cabinet

10 December 2024

Part 1 - Public

Executive Non-key Decision



Cabinet Member	Des Keers (Community Services)
Responsible Officer	Damian Roberts (Chief Executive)
Report Author	Gill Fox (Policy, Scrutiny & Communities Manager)

Community Grant

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Approval is sought in respect of the proposed 50th Anniversary Community Grant Scheme.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 For the Council to work with local voluntary and community sector organisations, to meet priorities set out in our Corporate Strategy, it is proposed that a one-off grant is offered to coincide with the 50th anniversary year of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That a 50th Anniversary Community Grant Scheme is launched with a budget of £50,000, as we come to the close of the council's 50th year.
- 3.2 That the grant guidelines, criteria and application process (as set out in Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the report) be endorsed.
- 3.3 That, the balance of £37,000 is ringfenced to support further community initiatives in 2025/26, including potentially a phase 2 of the borough wide pilot Enforcement Team, subject to a full review of the outcomes of the pilot.

4 Introduction and Background

To mark the 50th year of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, several proposals were put forward to take place throughout the year. One such proposal was to provide a grant scheme to support voluntary and community sector

organisations who are delivering much needed support to residents in the borough.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 Over recent years the Council has been awarded funding to deliver two Community Development Grant Schemes, using income provided by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Schemes were developed that invited applications from local community groups who were offering services that supported objectives in the Corporate Strategy. Priorities were identified and those groups who could evidence that they would support our priorities were awarded grant funding. Both schemes were successful with numerous projects delivered across the whole of the borough. The two schemes were over-subscribed, evidencing local need for funding of smaller organisations and charities to enable them to deliver projects and support services that help residents.
- 5.2 At the present time, we do not have firm confirmation of external funding for any future round of UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2025/26 or beyond. However, the council has agreed a sum of £87,000 to be allocated to support a one-off 50-year anniversary grant scheme.
- 5.3 Given that we have already delivered a Community Grant Scheme this financial year (using external funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) an amendment is now proposed. It is recommended that £50,000 remains allocated to our 50th Year Community Grant Scheme and the remaining £37,000 is ringfenced to support further community initiatives in 2025/26, including potentially a phase 2 of the borough wide pilot Enforcement Team, subject to a full review of the outcome of the pilot.
- 5.4 £50,000 for the 50th Year will provide adequate funds to run a Community Grant Scheme, which will be targeted at local community groups and charities. It is proposed that a new scheme is launched that replicates previous successful schemes, again addressing one or more of the Council's 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**
- 5.5 Detailed Guidelines and Scoring Criteria are provided at Annex 1 of the report and a suggested Sample Application Form is provided at Annex 2.

6 Other Options

- 6.1 There are no alternative options to consider. This scheme would be a one-off community grant scheme as part of the 50-year anniversary of the Council.

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 7.1 £87,000 has been allocated in the budget for the 50-year anniversary community grant scheme. For the reasons set out in the report, it is proposed that £50,000 for the 50 Year Anniversary Grant scheme is endorsed, with applications sought from local charities and organisations. Applicants will be able to bid up to a maximum of £2,500 based on set criteria.
- 7.2 It is proposed that the remaining £37,000 be ringfenced towards supporting borough wide community initiatives in 2025/26, including potentially a phase 2 of the borough wide pilot Enforcement Team, subject to a full review of the outcome of the pilot.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 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.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The matters raised in this report are considered to be routine, uncontroversial or not legally complex and a legal opinion has not been sought on these proposals.

10 Consultation and Communications

- 10.1 The scheme will be promoted via the council website and social media channels. All applicants are asked at application stage to confirm they are willing to acknowledge the support of the Borough Council with regards to media and publicity. As projects progress there will be ongoing opportunities to promote the activity that has taken place as a result of the grant received. This will include visits from the mayor to help raise awareness of the work undertaken by groups following receipt of the grant.

11 Implementation

- 11.1 The scheme can be launched on 2 January 2025 with a closing date of 2 March 2025. This will allow sufficient time for analysis, checks and scoring of all applications prior to final approval from Cabinet on 1 April 2025. Funds can then be allocated to recipients, from early to mid-April. Monitoring and publicity will follow over the course of the next 6 months.

12 Cross Cutting Issues

- 12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity
- 12.1.1 Some impact on reducing emissions in support of carbon neutral by 2030 or enhancing the natural environment.

12.1.2 Climate change advice has been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

12.2 One of the priorities for funding is “supporting environmental and carbon reduction initiatives” it is therefore likely that we will receive some applications that will support this objective.

12.3 Equalities and Diversity

12.3.1 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.

12.4 Other If Relevant

- Business Continuity / Resilience
- Healthy Lifestyles

12.4.1 The priorities that have been identified in the grant criteria include helping vulnerable communities, supporting healthy lifestyles, improving community safety and helping people access the workplace. It is therefore likely that applications will be received that support these objectives.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 – Guidelines and Scoring Criteria 50 th Anniversary Community Grant Annex 2 – Sample application form