

## Cabinet

01 April 2025

### Part 1 - Public

#### Executive Non-key Decision



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

#### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Community Grant Scheme

##### 1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval of schemes submitted for funding through the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Community Grant Scheme.

##### 2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 The proposed grant allocations are focussed on those projects that best meet the priorities for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Community Grant Scheme:

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

##### 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That the grant allocations as set out in Annex 2 of the report **BE ENDORSED.**

##### 4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 On 10 December 2024, as we approached the end of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Cabinet agreed to allocate £50,000 to support a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Community Grant Scheme. The criteria for this scheme is provided in Annex 1.

- 4.2 The scheme was open for two months, to applications from community and voluntary groups working in the Borough. The scheme closed on 2 March 2025. The grant received a total of 77 applications. The 67 eligible applications requested £154,842 amounting to over three times the available total pot. 10 applications were ineligible (for example, as they are businesses or are not providing services within Tonbridge and Malling).
- 4.3 Clearly with the volume of requests that came in against a relatively small funding pot, difficult decisions had to be made. The criteria and guidelines illustrated the scoring criteria that would be used to assess and compare bids, this was provided to all applicants. The bids were scored against the information provided by the applicant. Once the scores were allocated to each organisation, several options were considered. There was no perfect solution, but the best option was to offer lower amounts and fund more organisations. Applicants that received a lower score receive less funding, with amounts adjusted fairly by score to use up the maximum grant pot fund.

## **5 Proposal**

- 5.1 Applicants with a score of 20 or more receive 60% of the amount they requested (in most cases this amounts to a grant of £1,500 for the highest scoring applicants).
- 5.2 Applicants with a score of 19-16 receive half of the top amount, so £750 (with the exception of Tonbridge Repair Café who applied for £500 and will receive £250).
- 5.3 Scores of 15 and 14 also receive £750 if they have not received Council funding before.
- 5.4 Taking the above approach, did leave a small surplus which we wanted to allocate, given that the scheme is in such high demand. We have opted to uplift the RBLI grant (they now receive £1054). We feel this is important as we want to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and their proposed project would be difficult to progress on a lower sum. The remaining funds were split between two different guiding groups offering support for families on lower incomes and Trottiscliffe Parochial Church Council to provide step free access to the church (each to receive £750).
- 5.5 Using the above methodology, 54 applicants will receive funding, and 13 applicants will be unsuccessful for the scheme this time round.

## **6 Other Options**

- 6.1 All other options considered meant that fewer applicants received funding. The approach to offer lower amounts of funding to a wider range of groups was fairer and supported a good range of projects across the Borough.

## **7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 7.1 Details of grant amounts are set out in Annex 2. All applicants will be informed of their grant allocation and asked to confirm that they can proceed with the projects as outlined in their bid. Monitoring will take place in 6 months' time to ensure that projects have progressed.

## **8 Risk Assessment**

- 8.1 The application process has been designed to minimise risk, with assessments based on set criteria. Payments will 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 has been 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 because 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 Following Cabinet approval, the funds will be allocated to successful recipients from mid-April. Monitoring and publicity will follow over 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.

- 12.1.3 One of the priorities for funding is "supporting environmental and carbon reduction initiatives" and some of the applications support this objective.

## 12.2 Equalities and Diversity

12.2.1 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.

## 12.3 Other If Relevant

- Business Continuity / Resilience
- Health and Safety
- Healthy Lifestyles

12.3.1 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. Applications have been received that support these objectives.

|                   |                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Background Papers | None                                                                                                                                                     |
| Annexes           | Annex 1 – Guidelines and Scoring Criteria for the 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Community Grant Scheme<br>Annex 2 – Summary of proposed grant allocations |