

North East Derbyshire District Council

Cabinet

5 September 2019

Funding to Outside Bodies – Resourcing Emerging Priorities

Report of Councillor B Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships & Leisure

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To recommend the re-alignment of existing corporate budgets to ensure that emerging priorities identified in the 2019-23 Council Plan can be met.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 To meet the 2015-2019 Corporate Plan priorities the Council allocated its £132,799 voluntary and community sector grants budget by commissioning advice agencies and voluntary sector infrastructure support agencies with the aim of assisting over 13,000 vulnerable and disadvantaged households per year. The outcomes from the supported activity are reported to the Council annually. During 2018/19 22,944 households were assisted, with the level of grant support and outcomes per organisation summarised in Appendix 1. The monitoring forms which inform the sheet will be available at the meeting.
- 1.2 Despite the challenging financial environment for local government the Council is committed to delivering the best possible services for residents and is therefore retaining the budgets allocated to grants to the voluntary and community sector within the District. However, following the election of the Administration in May 2019 new priorities have been identified and included in the 2019-23 Council Plan to broaden the scope of support, which will require accommodation from within the existing resources.
- 1.3 To help communities address local issues and concerns the Council has pledged to develop and promote a Community Action Grants Fund, open to constituted voluntary and community sector groups from across the District who can demonstrate how they will deliver new activity which contributes to the achievement of the priorities set out the Council Plan. The draft proposed application form, which suggests periodic bidding rounds for funding up to a £500 limit, is included as Appendix 2. Ring-fencing sufficient resources will be required to ensure inclusivity for groups and communities across the District.
- 1.4 Another new Council priority is the development of an Older People's Strategy. Whilst this document is still in development, it is likely that actions will include the ongoing engagement with the District's older residents and the provision of advice and guidance to those who may be more vulnerable or at risk of social isolation. It is

therefore believed that the existing £4,000 budget for the support to the activities of local Older Peoples Groups and Luncheon Clubs should be retained and further promoted, to increase the current number of supported groups who provide valuable forums from which to engage residents about opportunities available to them.

- 1.5 The Council Plan and Climate Change Action Plan includes the priority of working with schools to protect and support native wildlife. Part of this includes the establishment of a Climate Change Small Grants Scheme for Schools, to encourage engagement with local young people. One bidding round has been successfully implemented, with 11 schools awarded a collective total of £2,953.50. From 2019/20 the Scheme is to be funded through re-prioritisation of existing budgets (previously assigned to partnership subscriptions). Consideration of increasing resources for this activity may be required within any budget review, to allow for additional bidding rounds within the year.
- 1.6 Confirmation of the financial support the Council wishes to award outside bodies will ensure that all related emerging priorities identified within the 2019-23 Council Plan can be appropriately resourced. This will also provide sufficient time to inform any organisations likely to receive reduced funding from April 2020/21 to make necessary preparations, in accordance with the Compact for Derbyshire.
- 1.7 In addition to the voluntary and community sector support the Council subscribes to twenty other partnership arrangements including delivery consortiums, technical associations and networks totalling £138,332. These contributions will be considered in the corporate line by line budget review.
- 1.8 It also suggested that the Council adopts good practice eligibility criteria for all future grant supports, including:
 - Only funding organisations with a constitution or governing documents which are not at odds with the values of the Council;
 - Not providing direct grants to individuals;
 - Not contributing towards equipment which has already been purchased;
 - Not supporting activities of a political or exclusively religious nature;
 - Not supporting projects which duplicate or replace statutory activity.
- 1.9 With the exception of the core grants to advice agencies and infrastructure bodies or subscriptions to agreed strategic partnerships, it is also recommended that funds are not used to support core organisational running costs (e.g. member subscriptions, room hire, insurance) as covering these expenses is generally the responsibility of the membership. In addition, contributing to the direct recruitment of permanent staff is generally not to be encouraged via smaller non-core grants, to avoid the Council supporting the increase of significant financial risks and liabilities of local groups; staffing budgets are better supported through larger funders such as national charitable bodies and foundations and commissioning by statutory agencies.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 Re-aligning the budget for grants to outside bodies to the emerging priorities identified within the 2019-23 Council Plan will ensure that all priorities can be appropriately resourced and efficiencies and outcomes maximised.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 All monitoring and service developments have equality as a core aim and are subject to the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Framework.
- 3.2 The Council is committed to the Compact for Derbyshire, which is based upon the national Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England. Should the Council reduce its awards to any third sector body they will be informed in accordance with the Compact (http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/sites/default/files/the_compact.pdf): *“4.4 Give a minimum of three months’ notice in writing when changing or ending a funding relationship or other support, apart from in exceptional circumstances, and provide a clear rationale for why the decision has been taken.”*

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Extending the Council's priority activities which require financial support to outside bodies cannot be achieved within the existing budget allocations.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 There are no negative financial implications to the Council as a result of this report.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 There are no legal or data protection implications as a result of this report.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 There are no human resource implications as a result of this report.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Cabinet determines the financial support the Council wishes to award outside bodies to ensure that all related emerging priorities identified within the 2019-23 Council Plan can be appropriately resourced.
- 6.2 That Cabinet determines the annual budget levels for the Community Action Grants Fund and Climate Change Small Grants Scheme for Schools.
- 6.3 That Cabinet agrees the good practice eligibility criteria for future grant support.

7 Decision Information

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies</p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
<p>Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed</p>	Yes
<p>District Wards Affected</p>	All
<p>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</p>	All

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title	
1	2018/19 Vol-Com Grants Summary	
2	NEDDC Community Action Grants Application Form	
<p>Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)</p>		
NA		
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