

REPORT TITLE: TOWN FORUM GRANT PROGRAMME UPDATE

19 MARCH 2020

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Anne Weir, Cabinet Member for Economy & Chair of Town Forum Informal Grants Panel

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WARD(S): TOWN

PURPOSE

The Town Forum for many years has provided funds to support the work of voluntary and community organisations in the Winchester Town, recognising the valued range of services they provide.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the following funding initiatives:

- Grant review 2018 – Strategic fund allocations – paper CAB3079
- Small grant allocations 2019/2020
- The launch of Crowdfund Winchester: Winchester Town Community Fund – paper WTF276

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Winchester Town Forum:

1. Note that the Town Forum's contributions to the Strategic fund allocations of £20,000 each for the Live Theatre Winchester Trust and Citizens Advice Winchester District continue for 2020/21.
2. Approve that the small grant programme continues to be operated in the new style of an interactive grant panel, involving the Town Forum Informal Grant Panel members.
3. Note the timescales for the launch of the Crowdfund Winchester: Winchester Town Community Fund.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES

- 1.1 The Council's grant programme has recognised that funding should be directed toward the priorities the Council Plan wants to achieve. Therefore priorities were agreed against which all grant applications will be assessed. The Town Forum fund established a further set of priorities for inclusion, environment and wellbeing.
- 1.2 **Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District**
- 1.3 The Council's community and voluntary sector grants programme supports projects that contribute to this outcome through the Environment priority.
- 1.4 **Homes for all**
- 1.5 The Council's community and voluntary sector grants programme supports projects that contribute to this priority through the Inclusion priority.
- 1.6 **Vibrant Local Economy**
- 1.7 People's health and wellbeing are an important factor in sustaining employment and being able to benefit from, and contribute to, the District's economic opportunities. Inclusive economic growth is important to our community's prosperity.
- 1.8 **Living Well**
- 1.9 The Council's community and voluntary sector grants programme supports projects that contribute to this outcome priority through the Wellbeing priority.
- 1.10 **Your Services, Your Voice**
- 1.11 The new crowd funding platform makes more effective use of technology to enable community projects to raise the funds they require. It will also lever in additional funding to extend the reach of Council-funded projects.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Town Forum grant budget for 2020/2021 remains the same as the previous year:

FUND:	2019/2020	2020/2021
Strategic Fund:		
Citizens Advice Winchester District	£20,000	£20,000
The Live Theatre Winchester Trust	£20,000	£20,000
Crowdfund Winchester:		
Winchester Town Community Fund	£33,000	£33,000
Small grant programme	£12,000	£12,000
TOTAL	£85,000	£85,000

The Town Forum contributes £80,000 towards these grants, with a further £5,000 top-up from the general fund in recognition of the district wide benefit.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence, to enter into a grant agreement provided there is good reason to do so. Authority to enter into the agreement is under the scheme of delegation to Service Lead – Legal in Part 3.4 of the Council Constitution
- 3.2 All funding must have sufficient checks in place to ensure that the funds are applied for the purpose to which the Council provide the grant. Grant agreements include safe guards such as inclusion of provision for robust monitoring requirements, in this case correct provision of the funds for overheads and running costs. .
- 3.3 There are no procurement implications as a result of these recommendations.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no additional workforce implications as these programmes are managed within the existing staff resources.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The Council's grant programme was consulted upon as part of the review in 2018. This included the proposal to launch a crowd funding platform to enable eligible local groups and organisations to raise funds for projects.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Projects that have negative or detrimental impact on the environment or are counter to the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency will not receive Council grant.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 The Council has a duty of care under the public sector equality act to turn their mind to the applicability of the decision on vulnerable groups /persons at the point of the decision making. .
- 8.2 An equality impact assessment (EIA) was completed for the Council's grants programme. The EIA was reviewed and approved at the Council's December Cabinet meeting. The EIA included the crowd funding platform within its scope, consequently a new or revised EIA is not deemed necessary.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The chosen supplier of the crowd funding platform has passed the Council's pass or fail requirements in terms of data security and processing.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 The funds administered by the Council are relatively low in value, however eligibility and due diligence assessments are undertaken initially by Crowdfunder and then the city council.

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Community Support</i> Local organisations and communities do not respond to the crowd funding opportunity or small grants.	The Council and supplier will provide support and will extensively promote the platform for applicants. Voluntary sector support service will assist grant applicants.	Local groups and organisations can develop their own campaign and be actively involved in putting forward projects for grant funding and Crowdfund Winchester.
<i>Financial / VfM</i> The cost of implementing the new online crowdfunding system does not give the return on	The implementation stage has been supplemented by a support package from the supplier to ensure	The Council has the potential to put its own projects on the platform in order to raise public funds

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
investment in terms of additional investment generated via fundraising, and efficiency of staff time in administering funds.	organisations are able to succeed in generating funds.	that contribute towards their delivery.
<i>Legal</i> New online crowdfunding platform fails or is abused and results in a legal challenge.	The Council must ensure that suitable measures are in place to ensure the project is delivered in accordance with the purposes of the grant	The proposals will enhance the delivery of projects with a social value to the Winchester district.
<i>Innovation</i> The use of a new online grant system results in organisations not being able to access grants.	The chosen supplier demonstrated a proven track record in operating, managing and supporting such platforms. The Council and supplier will provide support for applicants. Investigation was undertaken with other local authorities to understand and learn from any implementation issues.	Online systems present greater opportunity to engage communities willing to support local projects, helping to build local capacity and participation.
<i>Reputation</i> Failure or misuse of the platform causes negative press and public sentiment.	The service/system specification requires the monitoring and vetting of content and projects to ensure no bogus or inappropriate material is posted on the site.	The innovative use of online systems that gives greater access to funding and can potentially support a greater number of local projects.

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 In March 2019 the Council approved a new grants programme. The Strategic Fund, crowdfunding platform and the interactive grant panels were part of those funds approved for delivery.

Grant review 2018 – Strategic fund allocations

- 11.2 Two organisations based in the Town were deemed eligible and appropriate to fund via the Strategic Fund which is a non-competitive process designed for those who are deemed to hold a unique position the market and deliver support to the community that the Council values as sole providers of these services. The organisations within the Town awarded funding from this budget were:
- Live Theatre Winchester Trust
 - Citizens Advice Winchester District.
- 11.3 The funding allocations for these organisations were agreed for a 3 year period for Citizens Advice Winchester District (2019-2022) and a 2 year period (in line with Hampshire County Council's funding) for Live Theatre Winchester Trust (2019-2021). The awards were made over a longer period of time in line with the findings of the grant review in 2018 which highlighted the need for organisations to be provided with financial stability in terms of their income.
- 11.4 It is recommended that the Town Forum's contributions to the Strategic fund allocations of £20,000 each for the Live Theatre Winchester Trust and Citizens Advice Winchester District continue for 2020/21.
- 11.5 The following organisations who were also deemed eligible for the Strategic Fund were awarded a grant from the general fund as they were not able to meet the special expenses requirement:
- Nightshelter
 - Trinity

Small grant allocations 2019/20

- 11.6 As part of the grant review in 2018 it was concluded that a more proactive and face to face approach be adopted in order to engage with the local communities and organisations providing the services/activities. Councillors were also required to play a more active role in the distribution of funds. The new approach was also instigated to shorten the time in which the decisions on grant awards were made.
- 11.7 The budget for the 2019/2020 small grants increased by £5,000 due to an agreed contribution from the general fund to ensure that equity is spread across the district.
- 11.8 To date two funding panels (October 2019 and February 2020) were attended by Cllr Weir and Cllr Hiscock supported by the Funding and Development Officer. The panel met with 22 organisations over the 2 meetings and a summary of the grants awarded is shown at appendix 1.

- 11.9 Cllrs Hiscock and Weir have been encouraged by the great response and feel that they have received a wider variety of applications. The Councillors felt that the panel has been a positive experience; that they are more engaged with the process; and have a better insight into the projects and how they support our residents and inject life into our local town communities.
- 11.10 It is recommended that the small grant programme continues to be operated in the new style of an interactive grant panel, involving the Town Forum Informal Grant Panel members.

Crowdfund Winchester: Winchester Town Community Fund

- 11.11 Crowdfund Winchester was launched on 5 February with the 'Projects that Matter' programme, funded by the general fund. Calls for application are expected to generate interest in the match funding process following the winner's announcement for the competition which was announced on 2 March 2020 March. The winners were as follows:

Organisation	Location	Org type	Theme
<i>Minimal Waste Markets</i>	District wide	Social enterprise	Climate change
<i>Taste of Wickham</i>	District wide	Community group	Homes for all
<i>Brightful</i>	City	Business	Vibrant economy
<i>FirstBite</i>	City	Social enterprise	Living well
<i>Winchester Amateur Boxing club</i>	City	Community group	Living well

Some projects that weren't successful in the 'Projects that Matter' competition are likely to be signposted to the Winchester Town Community Fund as an alternative source of funding.

- 11.12 Criteria for the Winchester Town Community Fund was detailed in paper WTF276. The focus for funding is the following three outcomes against which the benefits they deliver to town ward residents will be judged. Projects are required to meet at least one of the outcomes:
- a) Inclusion
 - b) Environment
 - c) Wellbeing
- 11.13 The Winchester Town Community Fund will launch w/c 23 March 2020

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 As part of the grant review the Priority Outcome Fund was established. A number of organisations based in the Town have been awarded grants from the Priority Outcome fund, but were not able to meet the special expenses requirement so were funded from the general fund, namely:

- Blue Apple Theatre
- Footprints project
- Home-start Winchester & Districts
- Street Reach
- The Carroll Centre
- Winchester and District Young Carers
- Winchester Live at Home
- Winchester Radio
- Winnall Rock School
- Winchester Youth Counselling

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

WTF276 WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM GRANT ALLOCATION PROPOSAL – 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

WTF267 TOWN ACCOUNT BUDGET FOR 2019/20 - 17 JANUARY 2019

CAB3079 COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS REVIEW - 12 DECEMBER 2018

Other Background Documents:-

Funding themes and Priority Outcomes

APPENDICES:

Small grant allocations 2019/2020