

SUBJECT:	<i>Review of the Council's Community Development, Subs and Donations and Chairman's Community Fund Grants</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Community Portfolio – Councillor Paul Kelly</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Head of Healthy Communities - Martin Holt</i>
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WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All</i>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The review of the Chairman's Fund, Community Development grants, and the Subs and Donations fund, seeks to revise the Council's approach to its community funding and enable organisations to access a wider range of funding opportunities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. To merge the Community Development grants and the Subs and Donations fund to promote a grant scheme with a single application process. The criteria and scheme management to be the subject of a further report, but to follow the principles detailed in Appendix 3.
- 2.2. To continue to promote the Chairman's Fund, the criteria and scheme management to be the subject of a further report.
- 2.3. To promote a range of funding opportunities to enable voluntary and community organisations access funding for their services, including; Crowd Funding, Trust Funding, and local authority lottery funding.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. Grant funding is a vital part of the funding mix within a local economy as it enables the Council to work with voluntary and community organisations to respond to the needs of the community and to tackle health inequalities.
- 3.2. Grant funding may include small items such as rent, insurance, or funding projects and community initiatives. Grant funding may be part of the mix of funding being sought by the community
- 3.3. Grant funding assists in building capacity within the community and supports the delivery of services that are no longer being delivered by statutory agencies.
- 3.4. With increasing budget pressures the Council needs to find significant savings by 2019

- 3.5. The council currently has several different approaches to grant funding, through operating three grant funding streams and through the award of Service Level Agreements. This report seeks to rationalise the approach, reducing administration and management of the schemes and widening the opportunities for organisations to access other forms of funding.
- 3.6. The current grant schemes are confusing in that they offer funds with overlapping criteria at different times of the year. Introducing a Community Grants fund for grants up to £1,500 and retaining the Chairman's Fund for small grants up to £250 would reduce duplication of the schemes.
- 3.7. On occasion the council may choose to award grants in excess of £1,500, in future these would be through a Service Level Agreements for organisations delivering services closely linked to the Council priorities and that the Council wishes to support.
- 3.8. The introduction of a Local Authority lottery scheme, promoting the crowd funding initiatives and promoting community trust funding will diversify the funding opportunities for local community groups and encourage local community organisations to self-promote themselves more effectively and raise awareness of their group locally.

4. Content of Report

Current Situation

- 4.1. The Council currently supports a range of voluntary and community organisations that deliver services or enable community involvement and participation through grant funding of £89,110/annum. The mid-term financial strategy identifies the opportunity to deliver £18,000 savings from community funding.
- 4.2. South Bucks District Council currently operates three grant schemes; Community Development Grants, Subscriptions and Donations and the Chairman's Community Fund.
- 4.3. To ensure continued funding to organisations that have historically received Service Level Agreement funding from the Council, awards of funding have been agreed for the current financial year, until 2019/20 for; Three Rivers CAB, Padstones, and Wycombe Women's Aid subject to an annual review. Rape Crisis has also been awarded funding from the Council and Mediation Buckinghamshire is funded through an SLA with the joint Community Safety service.
- 4.4. It is envisaged that other partner organisations closely linked to shared services may apply for funding for 2017/18 onwards; any funding agreed would be through those joint funding streams. Applications would be considered following submission of a business plan and consideration by the Policy Advisory Group.
- 4.5. **Community Development Grants** are open year round and applicants can apply to 1 of the 4 different programmes: Community Development Grants, Community Environment Grants, Playground Grants and Village Hall Grants. The total money available for the current financial year is £15,000 across all four of the programmes. Groups can apply for capital purchases across the four grant programmes, all projects must be open and accessible to the public and located in South Bucks. Funding is available for the purchase of equipment or materials and

building and refurbishment works. Guidance on community development grants can be found here: <http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/CommunityGrants>

- 4.6. The '**Subscriptions and Donations**' scheme is designed to help organisations continue to provide important local services for residents. This grant is to help towards the general running costs but cannot be used to purchase equipment. The grant is open to organisations located within the district and/or to organisations that benefit local residents. Guidance on Subscriptions and Donations can be found here: <http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/Subsanddonations> . The funding available through the Subs and Donations scheme is £31680/annum
- 4.7. The **Chairman's Community Fund** provides funding to voluntary groups and smaller charities. Funding has been allocated to; artistic, cultural, sporting and leisure time activities, which improve the quality of life for participating residents. Local charities can apply for funding throughout the year and grants typically average £250 per application. Currently there is not a separate budget for this fund instead monies are externally raised throughout the year to enable grants to be made. Over the years funds have been raised through charity golf days, the Chairman's marathon, staff donations, the sale of London 2012 Olympic badges.
- 4.8. Since 2013/14 South Bucks District Council has awarded ninety three grants to sixty three different organisations. **Appendix 1** details the various organisations that have been awarded funding, how many times a grant has been given and how much funding has been awarded. This demonstrates the need for funding and range and diversity of organisations operating in South Bucks.
- 4.9. Since 2013/14, the ninety three projects have been awarded £119,409 in grant funding with the cumulative value of total project cost being £4,171,392 producing a return of 34 times greater than the Councils initial investment demonstrating excellent value.
- 4.10. Grants awarded range from £100 to £7,000 with the average being £1,280. Of the sixty three organisations, forty seven received a one off grant, eight have received a grant twice, four have received a grant 3 times, three have received a grant 4 times and one has received a grant for each of the last 5 years.

Proposal

- 4.11. Applicants have advised that the three current grant streams are confusing and time consuming to apply for funding. The Council also has to manage the three schemes undertaking activities to market, promote and administer the schemes. Amalgamating the grants in to two schemes would reduce costs and free up resources for other community development tasks.
- 4.12. It is recommended to develop a grant programme that is about meeting needs of the community, as identified by the community that the grant fund is targeted at. This could mean funding projects, or it might be funding core costs. Covering costs such as rent or insurances for organisations can enable them to continue to provide services and facilities for communities. There is a commitment to collective action to bring about change in communities.

In taking forward this approach for 2017/18 onwards it is proposed that Council operates;

A) The Chairman's Fund

4.13. Allowing access to funding for voluntary groups and smaller charities and individuals of up to £250 per application to support community led initiatives. The grant criteria to be clearly defined and a simple application and decision making process adopted. Funding would continue to be raised by the Chairman for this Fund.

B) Community Development Grants

4.14. Allowing access to funding of up to £1500 per application for projects, core funding and community initiatives. This to include small items such as rent, insurance, or funding projects and community initiatives. The grant criteria to be clearly defined and a simple application and decision making process adopted.

4.15. Administration of this Fund could be retained in house or consideration given to being matched funded by the 'Heart of Bucks' (formally Bucks Community Foundation) the countywide community foundation. As well as being match funded, any specific grant funds managed by the foundation e.g. Slough Fund could enable the COMPACT principle of applying once and accessing alternative fund raising streams, run by the community foundation.

4.16. The foundation would promote and manage the Community Development fund locally inviting the Chairman or other Council member to participate in the decision making process or the awards of funding, enabling the Council profile to be maintained. In return for managing the grants applications the foundation would normally charge 10% of the funding stream.

4.17. Through partnership delivery with 'Heart of Bucks' there may be options to develop the fund as a recognised charity enabling 'Just Donate' or 'Just Giving' to be promoted as a mechanism to enable charitable donations to top the fund and be tax efficient.

4.18. It is proposed that £10,000 is initially allocated to the Community Development Fund to be managed by Heart of Bucks which if matched would enable £20,000 to be available for local organisations.

4.19. Another report also proposes that the Council operates a local authority lottery, through which the Council could top up the Community Fund. Experience from other authorities operating such a lottery is that the Community Fund could be increased by £10,000/annum.

4.20. If £6,000 from the lottery was match by Heart of Bucks then up to £32,000 would be available for community organisations through the Community Development Fund which matches the current subs and donations programme (£31,680). Such an approach would enable £15,187 savings to be delivered in 2017/18 and as the lottery funding increases the contribution the council makes to the Community Development Fund could be reduced enabling the delivery of £18,000 savings by 2018/19.

CAB	42,430
Subs and donations	31,680

Community Dev grants	15,000
Total	89,110
Minus the SLAs	-63,923
Balance	25,187
Transfer to Heart of Bucks*	-10,000
Potential savings	15,187

* the top up allocation may reduce to zero as the lottery funding takes off enabling savings to be delivered.

Service Level Agreements

4.21. The review also identified that there are a limited number of key organisations that the Council grant aids to support their services being delivered in the area, that directly impact on the Council's key objectives as detailed in Appendix 2.

4.22. It is recommended to focus the Council's grant funding to support service delivery that assists the Council's objectives. Organisations receiving funding would be subject to outcome performance monitoring and awarded a three year service level agreement, reviewable annually, should the organisation no longer deliver in accordance with Council priorities.

4.23. Applications for funding from new organisations would be subject to a business plan meeting the Council's Objectives and subject to the Council's financial constraints.

Other Funding opportunities

4.24. A number of organisations have an indirect impact on the Council through their work in supporting volunteering and reducing isolation and delivering activities for young people or providing care services at home or in a hospice.

4.25. These organisations along with community groups, sports clubs, and charities would be encouraged to access other funding streams such as;

- Community Funding Trusts
- National Lottery Awards for All <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/england/awards-for-all-england>
- Other National Lottery funding programmes e.g. active People
- Crowd funding designed to promote Community and Voluntary organisations to fund projects and specific causes e.g. Crowdfunder which offers communities a share in projects they are delivering <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/community-shares-page?gclid=CNjvi8aC3c4CFYaVGwodifQEJA> . projects that could benefit include community buildings, community transports initiatives and community services being delivered by not for profit organisations e.g. village shops and pubs.

Community Benefit of these changes to grant funding

4.26. These recommended changes would build capacity within community organisations and reduce reliance on Council funding streams as well as;

- Increasing the profile of the Community Development Grants

- Reduced management of the Councils grant processes
- Providing matched funding mechanisms enabling the Councils community funding assistance to be maintained at current levels whilst enabling savings to be delivered
- Enable a link between the community organisations, their service delivery, supporters and funding streams such as; the crowd funding and lottery initiatives.
- Widen the access to funding streams to deliver community projects
- Potential of delivering £18k savings in SBDC or to reinvest funds in another organisation supporting the Councils aims and objectives in service delivery.

5. Consultation

To inform this report's recommendations previous recipients of Community Development Grants and Subscriptions & Donations Grants dating back over the previous 4 years were contacted and their views sought. 53% of recipients responded and were asked to comment on the following:

- Total cost of projects
- Number of beneficiaries
- Number of volunteers and paid staff
- Type of service provided
- Key groups benefiting from support
- Value (£) of your service outcomes
- Case studies
- Additional funding secured to deliver the service?
- What support would organisations require from the Council if funding was reduced or organisations were to be unsuccessful in a future application?

6. Options

Option 1

- Amalgamate the Community Development Grants and Subs and donations Awards in to a single grant scheme.
- Manage the new Community Development Grant scheme via the Heart of Bucks Community Funding Trust with the Councils contribution match funded
- Develop a local authority lottery
- Subsidise the new Community Development Grant via the local authority lottery.
- Support community groups to crowd fund projects
- Direct applicants to funding support and advice to access other grants

Option 2

- Continue operating three separate grant schemes but reduce the overall funding by £18K

Option 3

- To consider other options as discussed by members.

7. Corporate Implications

Reports must include specific comments addressing the following implications;

- 3.1 *Financial – Savings of £15,000 can be offered with this proposal in 2017/18 with the potential of further savings if the lottery performance is greater than anticipated.*
- 3.2 *Legal – Lottery will be fully licenced and the Council has powers to operate a local authority lottery.*

8. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- Sustain and Grow a Thriving Voluntary and Community Sector
- Help All Communities Get On Well Together

9. Next Step

Following agreement, to recommend to Cabinet the introduction of the Local Authority Lottery and a new grants scheme and its administration with Heart of Bucks.

Background Papers:	It is a legal requirement that we make available any background papers relied on to prepare the report and should be listed at the end of the report (copies of Part 1 background papers for executive decisions must be provided to Democratic Services)
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