

Management & Policy Committee - 10 March 2021

Item 4: Review of Community Grant Award Scheme

Report of G Keedy, Town Clerk

At its' meeting held on 15 April 2019, Town Council agreed a policy to support the long-running Community Grant Award Scheme.

This outlined the nature and purpose of the scheme, and combined with an updated application form highlighted eligibility criteria and the requirement for applicants to identify outcomes, with a sound case for their request for funding.

Consideration by Members at Finance & Resources Committee or Full Council of those applications received has led to occasional discussion about some aspects of the process and a need to "fine-tune" the operation of the scheme.

Specifically, these include:

1) Deadlines for submission of applications - the process determined that applications would be considered in June and November. This was to aid Council's financial planning and avoid a first-come, first-served approach which could exhaust the agreed budget allocation early in the financial year.

In practice, Town Council has twice agreed to relax the deadlines - to reflect a general lack of take-up; and in 2020 to take cognisance of the limited operations of some community groups due to the effects of Covid-19.

2) Applicant organisations with significant financial strength requesting assistance, which could be regarded as against the spirit of the Community Grant Award Scheme.

The financial position of an applicant organisation is not currently a factor for consideration in the process.

3) Under the current arrangements, Members are only able to consider applications based upon information contained in the written application form and there is no scope to seek further details from applicants.

4) The limited take up of the scheme since 2019.

Committee is asked to consider the above points and make any recommendations to Full Council re the following aspects:

Timescales for the submission of applications;

Introduction of an eligibility criterion relating to the financial position of an applicant organisation;

Attendance of a representative of the applicant organisation at Committee or Full Council to respond to Member queries;

Steps to promote the scheme and encourage take-up;

and,

Review of application form