

## Agenda Item

**Report of :** Head of Communities and Place  
**To:** Community and Resources Committee  
**Subject** Councillor Community Grants Scheme  
**Date** 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To have members consider the equal distribution between all ward Councillors of the 2020/21 Councillor grant underspend to be used in the year 21/22.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

As the scheme stands at the beginning of each financial year members is allocated £2,000 that they can use to assist eligible community projects, groups and organisations.

### **2. REPORT**

Of the £72,000 allocated to the scheme in 20/21, at the end of July annual cut off point for spend, a balance of £22,170 was remaining in the budget.

Although there are many possible uses for these funds, the simplest solution appears to be the equal distribution of £22,170 underspend between all 36 ward members.

This will mean that for the financial year 2021/22 each Cllr will be allocated an additional £615. This will give each Councillor a budget of £2,615 to support projects and organisations in line with the following agreed rules of the scheme:

#### **Aims of the scheme:**

- To enhance the role of Ward Members as Community Champions, providing you with the tools to support local groups in your communities and become more involved in local projects.
- Provide an opportunity for Ward Members to support projects you know meet identified local needs.
- Enable projects to secure funding when they don't meet the criteria and priorities of other funding programmes.
- Provide a quick and easy, accessible pot to enable projects to get off the ground.

#### **What is it for?**

- Projects and activities that benefit the residents of your ward.
- One-off items of revenue or capital expenditure.
- Grants may be used to partly or fully fund items of benefit to communities where there is no overseeing local voluntary committee suitable, by virement or payment of an agreed amount (between the councillor and responsible officers) from the individual Councillor grant fund budget to appropriate TDC service budget or provider.



□ In special circumstances grants can be made via internal virement/budget journal, where there is no suitable overseeing local body.

### **What/Who is not eligible?**

- Retrospective funding.
- Twinning activities that take place in appropriate Wards, and support local community events with open access, are eligible. Grants cannot be awarded for twinning activities outside of the UK.
- Grants direct to Parish Councils are eligible only for projects outside their core responsibilities. Activities which would normally be funded by precept monies are not eligible.
- Repeat funding for the same project.
- Activities contrary to Council policies.
- Activities which the authority has no legal powers to fund.
- Political activity.
- Hospitality.
- Donations to charitable organisations.
- Commercial organisations.
- Grants that seek to cover core organisational costs such as employees, rent, utility costs, will not be considered. Costs to support the work of volunteers will be considered.
- Grants for activities that promote religious beliefs. However, for the avoidance of doubt religious organisations can receive grants for the community and social aspects of their activity, where they do not restrict access to the project from their own religion, or other religions.

### **Who can apply?**

- Any group based within your ward, or beyond the ward where their activities benefit the residents of that ward, e.g. voluntary and community groups, schools, and clubs.
- The group does not have to be a registered charity but will need to have a bank account (or identify another organisation who can act as banker for funds). The group will also require a constitution, terms of reference or a set of rules.
- Groups/projects will need to prove the funding is needed (e.g. through supplying accounts, current bank account, where possible).
- Grants are not available to an individual.

### **How much is available?**

- Cllrs can offer grants of up to £2,000. You can award the whole £2,000 to one project, or break the fund down into smaller grants to a number of different projects. The minimum award for each individual grant is £100.
- Cllrs can offer up to 100% of the total project costs.
- Evidence of other funding (secured or applied for) must be demonstrated.

### **Councillor Community Grants Application Process.**

Members should hold an initial discussion with the applicant to determine the nature of the organisation, and the proposed project. If it is decided to award a grant the following actions are required:

1. Part A of the application form should be completed and signed by the applicant. The applicant must provide a copy of the organisation's constitution or governance document and proof that a bank account has been set up in the organisation's name.
2. Part B of the application should be signed by Members, or a confirmation e-mail supporting the application sent to North Devon+.
3. Members must provide any details of declaration of interest on the application form.
4. The completed application form should then be forwarded to the North Devon +.



**Funds must have been defrayed by the 31/07 in each year and any remaining balance after that point will be declared as an underspend on the budget.**

### **3. IMPLICATIONS**

#### Legal Implications

None.

#### Financial Implications

Within existing budget.

#### Human Resources Implications

None

#### Sustainability Implications

None

#### Equality/Diversity

Incorporated into the eligibility criteria for the Councillor Community Grants Scheme

#### Risk Management

There is a risk that organisations could make application to the Councillor Grant fund in order to relieve themselves of financial exposure to projects that they wish to support. This might come at the expense of other eligible groups and projects with a community. This risk can be mitigated by the careful management of the grant scheme by Cllrs and Officers who are able to decide on the eligibility of an application and it's accordance with the rules of the scheme.

#### Compliance with Policies and Strategies

The Councillor Community Grants Scheme helps to engage and empower communities

#### Ward Member and Lead Member Views

Date of Consultation – 06/10/21

Cllr Cottle Hunkin – Lead Member

### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Following discussion with the Leader and Deputy Leader it was agreed that the following recommendation would be made to committee. The recommendation is made in recognition that 20/21 was an extraordinary year with reduced community activity and events because of the covid pandemic. By agreeing the recommendation no precedent is set for the treatment of any underspend in future years.



## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

That Members approve the distribution of the 20/21 Councillor Grants underspend equally between all 36 ward members for use (in line with the Cllr Grants scheme guidance) in the 21/22 financial year.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Consultations: Cllr Cottle Hunkin – Lead Member  
Date of Consultation – 06/10/21

Comments - “The councillor community grants scheme is such a brilliant way for us as councillors to directly support our communities. It enables us to assist a vast array of projects and groups and I fully support the recommendation to divide last year’s underspend between councillors to give additional funding for this year’s grants. Covid has meant that most, if not all community groups have had to postpone their events and fundraisers, and so this extra funding will be a welcome boost as we come out of life in lockdown.”

Officers Consulted -  
Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Governance, S151 Officer.

Contact Officer: Sean Kearney

