

Cheshire East Council

Portfolio Holder Highways and Infrastructure

Date of Meeting: 6th February 2017

Report of: Frank Jordon – Executive Director for Place

Subject/Title: Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants funded through Sustainable Travel Transition Year

Portfolio Holder: Cllr David Brown – Deputy Leader of the Council; Highways and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. In June 2016, Cheshire East Council was successful with a bid for funding for £350,000 from the Department of Transport's (DFT) Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund (STTY) which is now available for delivery up to March 2017 in the Crewe and Nantwich area.
- 1.2. The Council's bid document for STTY outlined the programme of delivery which included the allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants, with £20,000 from the STTY grant, being allocated towards this funding element of the programme
- 1.3. In October 2016, the Council launched a campaign to raise awareness that local organisations, in the Crewe & Nantwich area could apply for Transport and Accessibility Grants of up to £9,999. The campaign was promoted in local media, social media and on the Cheshire East website. Three organisations applied for funding.
- 1.4. The purpose of the grants is to support local people to develop community-led initiatives. It is recognised that local communities are often best placed to identify their own transport and accessibility needs and these grants will enable the successful organisations the capacity to develop local solutions.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Highways and infrastructure approves the allocation of a grants to two of the three community organisations, who have applied, these being;

- Community Recycle Cycles £9,999
- Christian Concern £9,500

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. This project is externally funded by Department of Transport and was allocated via a competitive bidding process. A copy of the bid document is available at: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx. It contains full details of the bid, the targets we have agreed to achieve, and the costs and benefits. All projects are outlined within the bidding document and need to be in line with the objectives listed.
- 3.2. The Northern Development Gateway Zone was targeted since the area has the highest potential for growth and the highest levels of economic inactivity, with barriers to growth and employment caused partly by transport issues. Other areas in Cheshire East were unlikely to be successful in the bidding process because of the requirement for transition funding from previous LSTF work.
- 3.3. The option of not offering the grants to local communities was considered but it was felt that as the programme had previously been so successfully in a previous and similar project (Local Sustainable Transport Fund) that local communities would, once again, welcome the opportunity of being able to apply for this funding.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The assessment for the applications has been based on the criteria outlined in the 'Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants', which mirrors the STTY objectives, these being;

Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants

- Access to services
- Disadvantaged groups
- Community Involvement
- Financial Sustainability
- Other funding sources

Name of organisation	Details of organisation	Details of bid	Score out of 9.8 and reason for recommendation	Grant requested
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Community Recycle Cycles CIC	Works with volunteers and young people under the supervision of a CY-Tech L2 cycle mechanic who refurbishes donated bicycles and provides repairs at affordable prices. Runs Dr Bike sessions.	Wishes to expand existing services including Dr Bike to residents living in areas around Crewe. Costs to cover, staffing costs, management costs, workwear, publicity material, leaflets, banners	8.5	£9,999
			The application scores highly and meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the TAG policy.	
Christian Concern	A charity since 1987 that collect and redistribute furniture, food and cycles. Engage with local people to broaden their skill base and experience.	Continue to work with trainees and appoint a further trainee for a 12 month period on a cycle maintenance programme. Work with after school clubs (14 – 16) on a cycle maintenance course to respond to queries from parents about the need for such a training programme	8.5	£9,500
			The application scores highly and meets the aims of the STTY programme and criteria in the TAG policy.	
Motherwell CIC	Supports local woman on Mental Health and well-being issues.	To extend existing “Happy Feet” project promoting fresh air and walking. Wishes to train 3 additional volunteers	4.2	£2,995
			This application does not meet the criteria outlined in the policy as it does not enable people to access work, education or skills	

4.2. It should be noted that Community Cycle Recycles do not currently have two signatures on their bank account. However, they have committed to resolving this issue prior to receiving any grant from Cheshire East Council.

5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. Cheshire East Council has been successful in winning two of the Department of Transport (DfT) funding rounds for grants to support economic growth through sustainable travel and transport. The previous grant entitled Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which ended March 2015, enabled the Council to award grants to local community groups. These grants have been monitored and have shown to be successful with bringing benefits to the local community.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. Crewe South, Crewe East, Crewe St Barnabus, Crewe Central, Leighton, Crewe North, Nantwich North & West and Nantwich South & Stapeley.

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

- 7.1.1. The policy for the 'Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants' is shown in Appendix 1.

7.2. Legal Implications

- 7.2.1. The STTY grant is awarded from the DfT on the understanding that the authority will deliver the objectives as set out in the original bid.
- 7.2.2. The Council has the power to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making any decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably. A grant policy is a clear statement of the criteria that the Council is applying and is essential if the Council is to defend any challenge to its decision making process. The Allocation of Transport and Accessibility Grants policy has already been approved by Cabinet.
- 7.2.3. In accordance with the Constitution and paragraph 1.20 of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers the making of grants to voluntary and community organisations is not delegated to Officers. Grants up to £50,000 shall be for the decision of the relevant Portfolio Holder and grants over £50,000 shall be approved by Cabinet

7.2.4. The assessment criteria outlined in the policy provide a fair and equitable way to assess applications and award grants. The value of the grants to be issued under this policy (up to £9,999) does not necessarily require a formal Grant Agreement. However, the policy sets out a monitoring process to ensure that grants are used appropriately in line with the application and conditions for funding.

7.2.5. As part of the application form, organisations are required to disclose any other sources of funding to assess and guard against any potential state aid issues. It is unlikely that organisations have been or will be allocated grant funding in excess of the current de minimis levels applicable to state aid but it is prudent to monitor any potential state aid.

7.3. Financial Implications

7.3.1. The STTY programme is fully funded by a grant from the Department of Transport (DfT). The policy seeks to award grants of up to £9,999 on a match fund basis to communities located in Crewe and Nantwich. All funds which are awarded will be claimed in full from the DfT, in line with the Grant Agreement between the Council and the DfT. For the STTY programme, £20,000 has been allocated for this funding period

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment was written for the Sustainable Travel Transition Year bid and posted on the Cheshire East Website www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx

7.5. Rural Community Implications

7.5.1. Grants are available to communities located within the Northern Gateway Development Zone. This zone was identified by the Cheshire East Council bid for funding to the DfT

7.6. Human Resources Implications

7.6.1. There are no human resource implications

7.7. Public Health Implications

7.7.1. There are health benefits from promoting walking and cycling and an increase in the uptake of active travel.

7.8. Implications for Children and Young People

7.8.1. Children and Young people who are able to access the local community group's initiatives will benefit by learning about cycle maintenance.

7.8.2. There will be an opportunity for a trainee to learn about cycle maintenance with a potential to move into a future career. A previous trainee, working for Christian Concern, has obtained a job with Halfords.

7.9. Other Implications (Please Specify)

7.9.1. There are no other implications.

8. Risk Management

8.1. The policy makes clear that grants are awarded specifically for the purpose stated in the application and that should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the organisation may become liable to return the monies paid.

8.2. To ensure expenditure in line with the approved grant application and compliance with funding conditions, the policy sets out a monitoring process providing suitable safeguards to ensure that grants are spent appropriately and deliver value for money (etc). Failure to provide monitoring information within the timescale may result in the Council recovering the grant paid.

8.3. By launching and implementing the policies identified above, there is an opportunity to support grassroots initiatives and empowering local people to community-led initiatives, as well as supporting sustainable travel to help unlock the growth potential of Crewe. Failure to implement the policy will delay such initiatives.

8.4. Before the grant is awarded, successful applicants must sign a copy of a grant award acceptance form and agree to accept the terms and conditions of the grant as set out in the Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants.

9. Access to Information/Bibliography

9.1.1. A copy of the STTY bid can be found at:
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx.

10. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:

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