

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Date of Meeting: Monday 13 January 2014
Report of: Transport Manager
Subject/Title: Transport Grant Schemes – Application Assessment & Decisions on Award
Portfolio Holder: Cllr David Topping

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The report makes recommendations on the allocation of funding and vehicles in line with the associated policies and seeks a decision on award of small grant funding, shortlisting of expressions of interest for large grants, vehicle allocation and Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) business travel planning grant allocation.
- 1.2 The report summarises the outcomes of a detailed assessment of each application under the Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme, Vehicle Allocation Scheme and LSTF Business Grant Scheme. The policies associated with each scheme were agreed by Cabinet in October 2013.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the recommendations listed below regarding the outcome of each small grant application (up to £9,999) through the Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme. The total value of the applications recommended for award is £80,408.

Ref No	Organisation	Recommendation
TAG 1	Community Transport, Macclesfield District	Defer - £9,999
TAG 2	Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership	Award £2,439
TAG 3	North Staffs Community Rail Partnership	Award £1,624
TAG 6	Crewe Christian Concern	Award £9,999
TAG 7	Audlem & District Community Action	Award £6,000
TAG 8	Goodwill Village Hall Association / CHALC	Not Award
TAG 9	Congleton Disabled Access Group	Award £9,999
TAG 11	Wishing Well Project	Award £8,350
TAG 16	Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership	Award £3,000
TAG 17	Disability Information Bureau (Macclesfield)	Not Award
TAG 18	Congleton Partnership	Award £9,999
TAG 20	Great Places Housing Association	Not Award
TAG 21	Peaks and Plains Housing Trust	Award £9,999
TAG 23	Odd Rode Parish Council	Award £9,999
TAG 24	Open Hands, Poynton	Award £3,000
TAG 15	Disley Parish Council	Award £6,000

- 2.2 To agree the recommendations listed below regarding the short listing of expressions of interest for a large grant (over £10,000) through the Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme. The total value of the applications recommended for short listing is £81,586.

Ref No	Organisation	Recommendation
TAG 25	Poynton Town Council	Shortlist £18,000*
TAG 26	Poynton Town Council	Shortlist £22,500*
TAG 13	Poynton Town Council	Shortlist £30,000*
TAG 19	Cheshire Community Action	Shortlist £11,086*
TAG 22	Community Transport, Halifax	Not Shortlist

** Note that the final award value depends on Business Plan submission so the figures above are indicative at this stage.*

- 2.3 To agree the recommendations listed below regarding the allocation/offer of 9 surplus Council vehicles to community and voluntary organisations.

Ref No	Organisation	Recommendation
TAG 4	Rainow Parish Plan Implementation Group	Offer Vehicle
TAG 5	Crewe YMCA	Offer Vehicle
TAG 10	Congleton Disabled Access Group	Decline
TAG 12	Macclesfield Town Community Sports Trust	Offer Vehicle
TAG 15	Disley Parish Council	Offer Vehicle
TAG13	Poynton Town Council	Offer Vehicle
TAG 14	Calveley & Acton Primary Schools	Offer Vehicle
TAG 29	Congleton Partnership	Offer Vehicle
TAG 22	Community Transport, Halifax	Decline
TAG 28	Odd Rode Parish Council	Offer Vehicle
TAG 27	Central Cheshire Buddy Scheme	Offer Vehicle

- 2.4 To agree the recommendations listed below regarding the outcome of each application for an LSTF Business Travel Planning Grant. The total value of the applications recommended for award is £38,810.

Ref No	Organisation	Recommendation
LSTF 1	Cheshire Bespoke Ltd	Award £4,999
LSTF 2	Christian Concern	Award £3,925
LSTF 3	Leighton Hospital	Award £4,999
LSTF 4	Manchester Metropolitan University (1)	Award £4,999
LSTF 5	Manchester Metropolitan University (2)	Award £4,999
LSTF 6	South Cheshire College	Award £4,999
LSTF 7	Storage Boost (Crewe) Ltd	Award £4,750
LSTF 8	Trax Commercial Ltd	Defer - £4,750
LSTF 9	The Up and Under Group Ltd	Award £4,096
LSTF 10	The Up and Under Foundation Ltd	Award £1,044

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 A detailed assessment of each application has been undertaken in line with the assessment criteria for each scheme, which is contained in the associated policies approved by Cabinet in October 2013 (listed below). The assessment criteria provide a fair and equitable way to assess applications and award grants.
- Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants;
 - Policy for the Allocation of Surplus Council Vehicles;
 - Policy for the Allocation of LSTF Business Travel Planning Grants.
- 3.2 The Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme and Vehicle Allocation Scheme will support community-led activities which improve access to essential services, such as healthcare, shopping, leisure and other destinations that are important to local residents. The applications which are recommended for award/shortlist best meet the criteria in improving access to services, particularly for disadvantaged groups, with a high level of community involvement and proposals to sustain the project into future.
- 3.3 The organisations who have submitted a large grant expression of interest recommended for short listing are required to submit a Business Plan by 17 February 2014, which will then be considered at a second Portfolio Holder Decision Meeting on 10 March 2014. Poynton Town Council have submitted three large grant applications and it is recommended that they work with the Community Transport Association (CTA) to develop one combined Business Plan setting out a more strategic complementary package approach to their transport initiatives/projects in Poynton and surrounding areas (e.g. Disley).
- 3.4 The two applications which are recommended to be “deferred” will also be considered on 10 March 2014 following the submission of further information to support the assessment process. The value of the deferred application under the Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme is £9,999. The value of the deferred application under the LSTF Business Travel Planning Grant Scheme is £4,750.
- 3.5 The LSTF Grant Scheme is aimed at businesses and employers in Crewe. The applications which are recommended for award best meet the criteria in encouraging employees to walk, cycle, use public transport or car share for their journey to and from work, as well as business travel.
- 3.6 Annex 1 includes a brief description of each application and the reasons for the recommendation to award, defer or decline the application.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All wards.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All wards.

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 The policies support the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Ageing Well in Cheshire East Programme. Initiatives which improve accessibility have wider benefits including reduced isolation and social exclusion, and improved health and wellbeing. Promoting and enabling passenger transport, walking and cycling supports the climate change agenda through low carbon travel choices.
- 6.2 The LSTF business travel planning project directly supports the All Change for Crewe regeneration programme by enabling transport measures which help to unlock the growth potential of Crewe in a low carbon way. Encouraging increased levels of walking and cycling for short local journeys within Crewe has associated health and wellbeing benefits.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The financial implications of each scheme are outlined separately below:

Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme

- 7.2 In October 2013, Cabinet agreed the allocation of £250,000 for the grant scheme from the approved 2013/14 base budget. The grant scheme operates two tiers of funding based on the value – small grants up to £9,999 and larger grants of over £10,000.
- 7.3 The value of the small grant applications which are recommended for award is £80,408. In addition, one application has been deferred with a value of £9,999. Following approval, the small grant awards will be paid in February 2014.
- 7.4 The value of the expressions of interest for a large grant which are recommended for short listing is £81,586. However, the final value is dependent on the submission of detailed Business Cases/Plans to be submitted by 17 February 2014. The final value of the large grant allocations may be higher, but will not exceed the total budget available.
- 7.5 The Portfolio Holder Decision Meeting for large grant awards is scheduled for 10 March 2014, which will legally commit the funding in 2013/14 allowing them to be accrued for this financial year.

Vehicle Allocation Scheme

- 7.6 In October 2013, Cabinet agreed to allocate 9 Council-owned vehicles which are surplus to requirements to community and voluntary organisations. The vehicles vary in age ranging from 9 years old (2004) to 4 years old (2009) and

the policy makes clear that the vehicles are gifted in the condition as of the date of transfer.

- 7.7 In donating the vehicles to local organisations, this will facilitate the development of community-led transport initiatives which are tailored to local needs. The Council received 11 applications and following the assessment it is proposed that all 9 vehicles are allocated.

LSTF Business Travel Planning Grant Scheme

- 7.8 The programme allocation for the LSTF Grant Scheme in 2013/14 is £75,000 capital and £18,000 revenue. The Council received 10 applications for funding through the LSTF programme and it is recommended that nine are awarded (totalling £38,810) and one is deferred (total £4,750).
- 7.9 Of those which are recommended for award, the majority are for capital expenditure (e.g. cycle parking) – with a capital value of £37,766. One application is revenue expenditure for running a cycle event – with a revenue value of £1,044. The grant awards are therefore well within the programme allocation for 2013/14.
- 7.10 The LSTF Business Travel Planning Grant Scheme is fully funded by a grant from the Department for Transport (DfT). All funds which are awarded will be claimed in full from the DfT quarterly in arrears, in line with the Grant Agreement between the Council and the DfT.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The policy for each scheme has already been approved by Cabinet who have delegated the authority for the assessment of applications and the decisions on award of grants to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment (or subsequent Cabinet Member with responsibility for transport).
- 8.2 In all cases there is a condition requiring each organisation to report back to the Council on the expenditure of the grant. Consideration has also been given in each case to the imposition of other appropriate conditions (see Annex 1).

Policy for the Allocation of Transport & Accessibility Grants

- 8.3 Organisations awarded a small grant (up to £9,999) will be required to sign a Grant Offer Acceptance Form confirming that the grant will be spent in line with the application and terms and conditions of funding and ensuring that the grant can be recovered should it not be spent in accordance with the terms and conditions of funding. Applications which are short listed for a large grant are required to submit a Business Plan by 17 February 2014 which will then be considered at a second Portfolio Holder Decision Meeting on 10 March 2014.
- 8.4 Each organisation recommended for award has submitted the relevant supporting documentation including a signed constitution (or commitment to

provide prior to award of funding) and details of the management committee, bank statements (etc) to ensure that there is adequate governance underlying the organisation's activities.

- 8.5 As part of the application form, organisations have been 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 of around £150,000 (200,000 Euros) over 3 years but it is prudent for the Council to monitor any potential state aid.

Policy for the Allocation of Surplus Council Vehicles

- 8.6 Each organisation offered a vehicle must sign an agreement to confirm that they will become the owner and registered keeper of the vehicle in its current condition as of the date of transfer. The agreement will confirm that they will pay all the future running costs of the vehicle, including service, maintenance, Tax, MOT and appropriately insure and license the vehicle for the purposes outlined in their application form.

Policy for the Allocation of LSTF Business Travel Planning Grants

- 8.7 The value of the grants to be issued under this policy (up to £4,999) 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.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 The policies relevant to each scheme make 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.
- 9.2 To ensure expenditure in line with the approved grant application and compliance with funding conditions, the grant offer letters will set out a monitoring process to provide 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 all or part of the grant paid.
- 9.3 By launching and implementing the schemes, there is an opportunity to support grassroots initiatives and empower local people to support community-led initiatives, as well as supporting sustainable travel to help unlock the growth potential of Crewe. Once schemes are implemented, there is an opportunity to promote the projects via the Council's website and press releases.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The policy for the Transport & Accessibility Grant Scheme and Vehicle Allocation Scheme are available on the Council's website - www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/transport_and_travel/public_transport/flexible_transport_services
- 10.2 The LSTF Business Travel Planning Grant Scheme policy is available on the LSTF Smarter Ways to Travel web page - www.allchangeformcrewe.co.uk/smartertravel

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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