

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 10 July 2018

Report Title: Early Help and Community Grants Scheme

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Liz Wardlaw, Health

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Executive Director - People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The Council's Community Grants Scheme has been refreshed and renamed the 'Early Help and Community Grants Scheme'. In order to provide legal guidance for the operation of the grants scheme the Policy for the Allocation of Early Help and Community Grants Scheme requires approval from Cabinet each financial year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Cabinet approve the draft 'Early Help and Community Grants' scheme (Appendix 1).
- 2.2. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for People to make decisions on grant applications for funding from the 'Early Help and Community Grants Scheme'.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The Policy for the Allocation of Early Help and Community Grants 2018/19 requires adoption to allow the continuation of the community grants scheme throughout the financial year of 2018/19.
- 3.2. Approval for the Policy is annual as the budget for the scheme is agreed annually.
- 3.3. Early Help and Community Grant applications are considered at quarterly intervals with recommendations considered by the Executive Director for People. As the March Community Grants round did not take place, due to the review of the Council's Commissioning Plan, the first round for 2018/19 will occur in July 2018.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1. No other alternatives have been considered.

5. Background

- 5.1. The Integrated Commissioning Team has developed an Early Help Framework to offer a single mechanism for relevant commissioning activity for early help services. The Early Help Framework Specification and the Early Help and Community Grants Policy together form the Council's strategic vision for early help and prevention, thus orientating them to reduce or delay the need for people to access statutory health or social care services. This is because their needs will have been addressed 'upstream', before their health deteriorates.
- 5.2. Cheshire East Council has operated a long-standing Community Grants Scheme since 2009. The aim of this scheme was to support the voluntary, community and faith sector with small scale projects, events and activities that improve the quality of life for local communities. This scheme operated under the Policy for the Allocation of Community Grants, and grants awarded met the Council's Corporate Outcomes.
- 5.3. The current scheme has been refreshed and renamed the Early Help and Community Grants Scheme. Grants will be awarded under the Policy for the allocation of Early Help and Community Grants. This will result in local people being helped to 'live well and for longer', with resilience built so that residents are empowered to recognise and address their own health and wellbeing needs. This includes making the most of assets within communities.
- 5.4. The Community Grants Scheme previously had three categories:
 - 5.4.1. **Events** that are classed as one-off annual events which benefit whole communities and include these communities in the organisation and planning of events up to a maximum of £1,000
 - 5.4.2. **Activities** which contribute to the development and wellbeing of the community and are ongoing throughout the year up to a maximum of £1,000
 - 5.4.3. **Facilities** building used for community purposes, open spaces, sports and play areas etc up to a maximum of £5,000

The Community Grants budget is £200k for 2018/19. As this funding is finite it is important to focus grant funding on activities where clearly defined

outcomes can be achieved. This means the events and facilities categories have been removed and replaced with a start up grants and community activity category with a maximum grant award of £5,000.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

6.1.1. The Council has the power to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence in 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 the 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. An overarching Corporate Grants Policy provides a consistent basis upon which policies are created and reviewed regularly.

6.1.2. The Policy for the Allocation of Early Help and Community Grants 2018/19 deals with the allocation of grants which are awarded to defined organisations following an application process and against set criteria. There are conditions requiring that organisations report back to the Council upon expenditure of the grant and to enable further appropriate conditions to be imposed. The decision making process is delegated to the Executive Director for People in accordance with the financial limits set out in the Corporate Grants Policy.

6.1.3. Grant funding to organisations based on the application of the Council's Early Help and Community Grants policy satisfies the Council's public law duties. A competitive grants process is an open, transparent and fair means to afford all eligible organisations the opportunity to compete for and obtain grant funding from the Council. It is a means to distribute limited resources amongst such organisations and to support and encourage the introduction of new community initiatives.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. The options have no overall financial impact to the council as total Cheshire East budgets will remain the same, grants awarded in any year will only be awarded up to the budgeted amount. The base budget for the Early Help and Community Grants in 2018/19 is £200k.

6.3. Equality Implications

6.3.1. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed.

6.4. Human Resources Implications

6.4.1. The Early Help and Community Grants Scheme will be managed through existing resources within the Communities Team.

6.5. Risk Management Implications

6.5.1. The risk of not agreeing an approach to provide funding opportunities to the voluntary, community and faith sector is that some organisations may be unable to continue to undertake activities which the Council would wish to see in place and which support the Council's aims and objectives, resulting in a loss of community benefit.

6.5.2. As the March community grants round was not held, whilst the scheme was reviewed, some organisations have missed the opportunity to apply for funding for their activity as retrospective applications cannot be granted. Therefore there will only be 3 rounds for 2018/19 and the scheme may be underspent.

6.6. Rural Communities Implications

6.6.1. There are no negative implications on the rural community as the Council's Early Help and Community Grants scheme is open to anybody to apply, as long as they meet the schemes criteria.

6.7. Implications for Children & Young People

6.7.1. Moving towards an outcome focussed approach gives greater opportunity for organisations to meet the needs of children and young people.

6.8. Public Health Implications

6.8.1. The Early Help and Community Grants scheme gives a positive health outcome as people are coming together in community groups and meeting other, like-minded, community members, which reduces social isolation.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All wards and members.

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1. Engagement took place with the voluntary, community and faith sector during the development of the Early Help Framework.

9. Contact Information

- 9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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