

Subject: Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Grant Process 2020/21

Report to: Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee – 12th December 2019

Report by: Holly Notcutt, Community Development Manager

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That members consider and discuss the two options and associated implications, and agree a preferred course of action for delivering community and voluntary sector grants in 2020/21.**
- 2. That the Committee nominate four members to participate in the grant panel.**

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2019/20 the council provided annual funding of £99,500 for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise grants. In 2019/20 the council awarded a one-year grant beginning in April 2019, running up to the end of March 2020. £54,000 of this fund is allocated through the GYBC General Fund, with the remaining £45,500 allocated from the Housing Revenue Account. The council now needs to agree the process for commissioning the grants from April 2020.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. On 25 October 2018 the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee agreed the establishment of a Grant Panel to make recommendations for the 2019/20 grant allocation. The Committee also agreed a new set of commissioning criteria for the grants: Housing, budgeting, debt, benefits and crisis advice; Economic growth, skills, training and employability; and Environment, improving the borough's open and green spaces. These themes were in line with The Plan, the council's corporate plan.

2.2. In 2019/20 grants were awarded, commencing in April 2019, to:

- First Move Furnishaid £19,000
- GYROS £17,000
- Citizens Advice Bureau £19,750
- DIAL £19,750
- Homestart £19,000
- Foodbank Plus £5,000

3. CURRENT SUMMARY OF DELIVERY

3.1. The funds, awarded for a 12-month period from April 2019, were allocated to a variety of activities/support services, including: contributions to supporting residents with money, debt and budgeting advice; support with skills development and employability; family intervention support; and developmental crisis support. The table, below, summarises the use of the funding for the 2019-20 period.

| Organisation | Amount | Summary | Target no. residents to support |
|-----------------------|----------------|--|------------------------------------|
| First Move Furnishaid | £19,000 | Provision of support to people to attend ICT support sessions to complete a basic level 1 course and access pre-employment support. Support targeted at individuals who are long term unemployed or trying to re-enter the workplace and need a basic level of ICT knowledge and/or help such as CV writing. | 105 |
| DIAL Great Yarmouth | £19,750 | Provision of a part time money and debt advisor to support people who have financial issues by providing budgeting support, setting up manageable repayment plans, and liaising with creditors. | 230 (60% GYBC housing tenants) |
| Citizens Advice | £19,750 | To deliver free, generalist advice and information primarily covering welfare benefits, debt, finance, housing, energy, employment, immigration, consumer and family matters via the Great Yarmouth office and outreach service. | 1000 (125 GYBC housing tenants) |
| Food Bank Plus | £5,000 | Provision of mentoring support for people regularly visiting the foodbank. Focus on people who are unemployed and experiencing crisis to gain confidence, professional skills, and team-working experience, plus access an addiction recovery course. | 40 |
| Homestart | £19,000 | Provision of home-based support through intensive weekly or fortnightly support visits to around families with young children. This includes getting children school ready, to enable families with young children to improve their health, improve their household and financial management, reduce inequality and improve children's life chances. | 23 families |
| GYROS | £17,000 | Operation of a Job Club and embedding ESOL training within key employment related training i.e. food hygiene and health and safety courses. Support CV writing, applying for jobs and English language support for residents. 2-hour session each week. | 120 |
| TOTAL | £99,500 | | |

- 3.2. Following 6 months of delivery, the original appraisal panel was reconvened in October 2019, to undertake a mid-term appraisal of work to date. Each of the 6 organisations presented on their agreed delivery, providing an update on progress and outcomes achieved to date. A further monitoring update will be required from all the grant recipients upon completion of their delivery. This will be in written format, and organisations will be required to provide quantitative and qualitative detail to demonstrate the impact and outcomes of their project delivery, as per previous years. Notification for this will be actioned in early 2020.

4. 2020/21 APPRAISAL OF OPTIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

- 4.1. Due to the current time frame available, it is proposed that the committee consider two options for the forthcoming financial year.

Option one

- 4.2 The committee consider extending the grants to the current grant recipients for one further year, subject to satisfactory monitoring at the end of the 19/20 funded period. This option will allow for relative stability for residents in receipt of the associated grant funded support and provide a level of continuity of service provision.
- 4.3. During this extension, the committee will be able to allocate appropriate time to review, re-design and implement a refreshed commissioning process. During this exercise, the grants panel will take in to account the work of the Norfolk County Council VCSE manager's assessment of work in the sector, plus also review the council's own work with VCSE organisations. This will also address the short time frame available for the commissioning process (if it were to commence from 1 April 2020), which may disadvantage some organisations' ability to prepare and submit an application.
- 4.4 The existing grants panel would be retained to monitor the grants during 2020/21, allowing for continuity or appraisal.

Option two

- 4.4 The committee nominate a grants panel to oversee the grant allocation process for 2020/21. The panel will ensure that grant funded delivery is in line with delivering the council's strategic objectives outlined in the new Corporate Plan, particularly in consideration of the following 2020/21 themes:
- **Housing and strong communities** – supporting people through providing welfare themed advice and guidance, including debt, benefits, household budgeting, and supporting people in crisis situations to become more resilient.
 - **Strong and growing economy** – employability themed support to help people, including young people, to develop skills, access training, improve employment prospects, access paid sustainable jobs, and support to develop skills-based initiatives/enterprises in order to enable our town centres to diversify and thrive.
 - **Sustainable environment** – support to develop community-based sustainability, recycling and carbon reduction initiatives, and support to sustainably improve and maintain open/green community spaces across the borough.
- 4.5 The panel will review submitted applications, including interviewing shortlisted organisations, and agree the funding allocations to successful bidders. Grants will be made available from the existing budget, with a designated allocation from within this to be administered as 'Small grants', to accommodate and support the development of new and fledgling VCSE led activity which meets the identified priorities of the corporate plan. Recommendations will be brought to the housing and neighbourhoods committee for ratification. To enable a sufficient period of time for bids to be open this is likely to mean that most successful organisations may not

commence their services until approximately May or June 2020 (although funding would be available from April 2020).

5. THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS

5.1. If the committee wish to undertake a new grant allocation process for 2020/21, a grants panel delegated from the committee will be required to undertake the following functions:

- Monitoring existing grant funded delivery (2019/20)
- To oversee a grant allocation process for 2020/21
- To consider small and large grant applications against the commissioning criteria, including interviewing bidding organisations
- To make recommendations to the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee for the allocation of grant funding

5.3. It is proposed that the Grant Panel is composed of four elected members and two officers. The Panel should be politically balanced. The elected members to be nominated from the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee. The officers proposed shall be a Strategic Director and the Community Development Manager.

Steps in the process

5.4. The timeline for the process will be as follows:

- A call for Expressions of Interest will be launched in January 2019
- An Invitation to Tender, containing specifications for delivery, will be issued in January 2019
- A simple application process will follow, via the online procurement portal, allowing organisations to openly bid
- Scoring criteria will be made available within the ITT, allowing organisations to shape their applications accordingly
- Deadline for applications is early to mid March 2020
- The Grants Panel will appraise applications in March 2020
- Recommendations made to the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee on 9th April 2020
- Notifications on awards will be made in April 2020, following committee approval
- Delivery commences from April 2020 for a one-year period, subject to monitoring.

5.5. A communications plan will be developed to advertise opportunities, providing detail of the opportunities to bid, the application and appraisal processes, and to communicate outcomes. Support will be available for potential bidders for the application process, especially smaller organisations, through Neighbourhoods that Work funded Community Development support, via Voluntary Norfolk.

6. RISK

In consideration of the current timeframe available (for option 2), a commissioning process commenced in January 2020 would impact on potential continuity of staff and delivery

currently funded via these grants, risk disrupting service delivery, and risk undermining the continuity of support available to residents for some organisations.

7. FINANCE

The budget for community/voluntary sector grants in 2019/20 is £99,500. As in previous years, members will determine the size of funding available for the 2020/21 grant process through the council's medium-term budget process.

8. LEGAL

There are no legal implications.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1. That members consider and discuss the two options and associated implications, and agree a preferred course of action for delivering community and voluntary sector grants in 2020/21.**
- 9.2. That the Committee nominate four members to participate in the grant panel.**

| Area for consideration | Comment |
|--|----------------|
| Monitoring Officer Consultation: | Yes |
| Section 151 Officer Consultation: | Yes |
| Existing Council Policies: | No |
| Financial Implications: | Yes |
| Legal Implications (including human rights): | No |
| Risk Implications: | No |
| Equality Issues/EQIA assessment: | No |
| Crime & Disorder: | No |
| Every Child Matters: | No |