

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Executive

16th August 2022

Ward Councillor Community Fund Grants – Criteria Review

Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Sarah Jane Croke – Housing, Safeguarding & Support
Strategic Director/Head of Service	Louise Livingston – Head of HR, Performance & Communications
Report Author:	Jayne Boitout - Community Partnership Officer
Key Decision:	Yes
Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report	12 th July 2022
Wards Affected:	All

Summary and purpose

To update the existing criteria of the Council Ward Councillor Community Fund Grant Scheme.

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the Ward Councillor Community Fund Grant Scheme be amended, as outlined in Annex A to this report.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1. At the Executive meeting on the 20th October 2020 a number of measures were introduced which were designed to enable and strengthen our community. The Ward Councillor Scheme is to enable the community, through small grants, to provide small but important acquisitions or for direct costs that focus on localised needs and provide funds of up to £500. The amendments set-out realign the original aim of this scheme.
- 1.2. The new scheme has been in operation since December 2020. At the Executive meeting on the 25th January 2022, it was agreed as part of the review of Community grants, to cease the carry forward option of all unallocated funds from 31st March 2022. Any recorded underspend at 31st March 2023 was to be reallocated to meet community needs. It was further agreed that this scheme to be reviewed for of the start of the new municipal year 2023/24.
- 1.3. For the period from the 1st December 2020 -31st March 2022, a total of 132 applications were received, with awards to date of £50,637 with 67

organisations benefitting within Surrey Heath further information is available in Annex C.

- 1.4. This funding scheme is not only popular but successful with community groups, and offers members the flexibility and discretion of being able to support where it is most needed locally.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 This scheme enables Councillors to engage with their community representatives and to provide some financial support where it is needed the most. As can be seen in paragraph 1.3, for the year ending 31st March 2022, 119 awards (to date) were provided at a cost of £50,637.

3. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council has the option to
 - 3.1.1 Support the amendments as set-out within the proposals.
 - 3.1.2 Change the amendments as set-out in the proposals.
 - 3.1.3 To retain as is, and not amend the criteria.
- 3.2 It is suggested to approve as outlined in 3.1.1 above.

4. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy

- 4.1 The Grants link to the Health and Quality of Life section and work towards nurturing the strong sense of community across the whole borough, fostering a sense of respect and consideration, and it enables a positive approach to supporting all sectors of our community, including those who are most vulnerable, and where possible promote active and healthy lives for all and a rich programme of cultural and community events.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The Council has over many years worked hard to establish and retain strong links to community and voluntary organisations which they work in partnership with and or can perform functions on the Council's behalf.

6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

This funding scheme is included within the base budget and there is no carry forward of uncommitted budget.

7. Legal and Governance Issues

- 7.1 Not-for-profit groups must have objectives and/or terms of reference to provide benefits and social value to the wider public; the purpose of any Ward Councillor Grant application must demonstrate how public benefits and social value are achieved.
- 7.2 The revised criteria for the awarding of this grant helps to ensure a consistent approach to governance.

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

- 8.1 No matters arising.

9. Other Considerations and Impacts

Environment and Climate Change

- 9.1 No matters arising.

Equalities and Human Rights

- 9.2 The revised criteria ensures that the award scheme is as inclusive as possible and that as many community groups as possible are able to receive funds through this scheme

Risk Management

- 9.3 No matters arising.

Community Engagement

- 9.4 The Ward Councillor grant scheme is to give councillors the ability to facilitate and support projects that are happening their community and help support community engagement.

Annexes

Annex A – Revised Criteria from 1st September 2022

Annex B – Existing Criteria

Annex C - Details of Grant Awards 1st April 2021- 31st March 2022

Background Paper: None