

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: 1 March 2022

Report by: Councillor Jonathan Kaye – Executive Member for Communities

Report title: Community Grants Priorities 2022/23

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – The council’s Community Grants Policy includes the provision for members to review the priorities for grant giving on an annual basis. This report sets out the proposed updated priorities for 2022/23.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL that:

- a) the updated Community Grants priorities for community grant giving be approved
- b) authority be delegated to the Head of Housing and Health, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for Communities, to determine operational matters relating to community grant giving in 2022-23.

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 It is proposed that the priorities for awarding community grants in 2022/23 be updated. The new priorities include provision for marking the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. The proposed priorities for 2022/23 can be found in Appendix A.
- 1.2 It is proposed to Council that the Head of Housing and Health, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for

Communities, be given the delegated authority to amend the operational elements of the community grant giving procedures in light of the recommended priorities.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Community grant giving helps strengthen communities, enabling residents to work toward a common goal, develop and maximise their community assets and bring about positive change, leading to improved health and wellbeing for residents in East Herts.
- 2.2 Community grant giving also takes forward the new East and Equal Strategy (2021-2025) and helps to build relationships with people with protected characteristics.
- 2.3 The council's community grants policy is kept under review with the last amendments approved by Council on the 2nd March 2021. The existing policy and programme can be found [HERE](#). No amendments to the overall policy are now proposed. It is recommended, however, that the Head of Housing and Health, acting in consultation with the Executive Member for Communities, be delegated the authority to make any changes and updates to operational procedures.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 The annual priorities for community grants form part of the council's Community Grants Policy which is reserved for determination by full Council, thus the revised priorities are now being recommended to Council.

Updated priorities

- 3.1 The proposed priorities ensure that community grant giving reflects the refreshed corporate plan. The new priorities are intentionally broader, encouraging applicants to think creatively about how they can deliver on our priorities in their neighbourhood.
- 3.2 Over the coming year, it is to be expected that community grant giving will also be informed by the results of the Hertfordshire Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment 2021/22.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 3.3 Officers have considered the impact of the updated priorities on people with protected characteristics. It is considered that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on anyone with a protected characteristics, whether individually or as a group, as no organisation who would have been eligible for a community grant under the previous priorities will be excluded or have reduced eligibility under the proposed revised priorities. Furthermore, it is considered that the new 'Diversity and Inclusiveness' priority will help support bids for grants that will tackle some of the equalities challenges that some of our communities face.

Community Covid-19 Recovery Fund

- 3.4 Officers applied and obtained an extra £200,000 from the Hertfordshire Health Protection Board to support voluntary and community groups and their clients most impacted by Covid-19. This provides an additional means of supporting community groups in the district.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Do not update the priorities or provide delegated authority for operational changes – NOT RECOMMENDED as it is important that the priorities are reviewed annually to ensure community grant giving continues to address the most pressing community issues at this time and that the grants programme is inclusive, creative and experimental.
- 4.2 Update the priorities and policy – RECOMMENDED to ensure the community grants programme is more inclusive and attractive to harder-to-reach groups and enables residents to put their own solutions in place that creatively takes forward the council's strategic priorities at the neighbourhood level.

5.0 Risks

If the priorities were not updated

- 5.1 This would reduce the council's opportunity to maintain a mechanism whereby it can kick start innovative ideas and thus community grant giving would arguably be less effective. Adopting the proposed 2022/23 priorities mitigates this risk as does continued signposting to the East Herts Lottery in order to support local good causes.
- 5.2 There would also be a possible reputational risk as the council's responsive, creative and forward stance could be compromised.

If the priorities were updated

- 5.3 Should the priorities be updated there is a small risk that there would be less take up due to the priorities being broader than before, thus reducing organisations' ability to understand what the council wishes to fund. To reduce this risk, officers would

post information on social media and use existing networks to provide examples of the types of projects that could be supported. Grants workshops and drop-in advice sessions would be provided.

- 5.4 The impact of these risks, in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3, has been assessed. Overall, it is considered that the risks would be minor in the wider scheme of things and carry little financial risk.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 This latest review of the Community Grants priorities was conducted by officers of the Housing and Health service in consultation with the Executive Member for Communities, having regard to the delivery of and feedback on the 2021/22 programme.

- 6.2 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found below.

Community Safety

Perception and fear of crime and maintaining good community safety is closely connected to the resilience and strength of a community. Support for events and projects that bring people of different backgrounds together helps build civic pride, creates a sense of belonging and more resilient neighbourhoods

Data Protection

A GDPR statement is included on grant applications to minimise any risk of data breaches.

Equalities

An EQIA was completed and approved last year and is posted on our website [HERE](#) As noted in the body of the report, it is considered that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on anyone with a

protected characteristics, whether individually or as a group, as no organisation who would have been eligible for a community grant under the previous priorities will be excluded or have reduced eligibility under the proposed revised priorities. Furthermore, it is considered that the new 'Diversity and Inclusiveness' priority will help support bids for grants that will tackle some of the equalities challenges that some of our communities face.

Environmental Sustainability

East Herts Council's corporate priorities form the direction of travel for community grant giving and one of the headline grant priorities is: environmental sustainability. Grant giving enables the voluntary and community sector, including community centres and villages halls, to reduce their carbon footprint and explore more environmentally sustainable actions.

Financial

Internal budgets are under increasing pressure so it is vitally important that the council continues to raise awareness about the [East Herts Community Benefit Lottery](#), which is an innovative way to generate income for the grants budget, replacing the need to use council monies.

Health and Safety

Eligibility criteria state that the applicant has policies in place to ensure the safety of those taking part. Applicants must confirm this is the case and if officers have any concerns they will ask to view documents. Safeguarding policies must be submitted as part of the application.

Human Resources

No direct implications

Human Rights

No direct implications

Legal

No direct implications

Specific Wards

Projects that take place in the top 10 wards for deprivation (according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation) are considered a priority and are considered first.

Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Existing Community Grants Policy.

Contact Member

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