

Policy Committee – 6th June 2017

Review of Pilot Ward Member Grants Scheme



Report of the Chief Executive

Lead Member: Councillor Linda Brockbank

Ward(s) affected: All

1. **Purpose of Report** – To review the Ward Member Grant scheme that was piloted in 2016/17 in place of the Community Grants Programme.
2. **Recommendations** – Members are recommended to:
 - 2.1 Note the contents of the report
 - 2.2 Approve running the scheme in place of the Community Grants Programme for 2017-18
 - 2.2 Approve the introduction of a cap of £2k for the maximum amount of funding jointly awarded by Councillors
 - 2.3 Approve a budget of £30k for the scheme which is £1k per Councillor, and a supplementary estimate of £15k to be funded from New Homes Bonus.
 - 2.3 Approve that the underspend for 2016/17 (£3,534.38) is split equally between all councillors. The individual grants consisting of:
 - £500 per Ward Member allocated in the revenue budget for 2017-18
 - £500 per ward member from the £15k new homes bonus
 - £118 per ward member from the underspend in 2016/17
 - total amount per Ward Member being £1,118.
 - 2.5 Approve changes to documentations in Appendix C to make administering joint applications easier
3. **Report**
 - 3.1 **Background**
 - 3.2 The Council has a long standing commitment to empowering people and organisations to do more to help communities throughout Craven.

- 3.3 Over the past 15 years up until 2016 Craven District Council had helped local people to provide community run events, services and facilities in their towns and villages by providing funding through the small and medium community grants scheme for awards between £100 and £1,000. The schemes also supported local citizens to become more actively involved in their communities.
- 3.4 In 2015 the Leader of the Council, Cllr Richard Foster gave a commitment to introduce Ward Member budgets, allowing every District Councillor to respond to local needs by recommending the allocation of small amounts of money to support projects or activities that benefit the communities they represent.
- 3.5 Ward Member budgets would:
- Increase levels of community engagement at a very local level
 - Allow flexible and timely funding of very small initiatives within communities which provide flexible and immediate solutions
 - Help communities help themselves
 - Enhance the social, economic and or environmental wellbeing of the community
- 3.6 The Ward member Grant Scheme was introduced in 2016/17 and each Member was allocated funding of £1,000. The funding for small and medium community grants were combined with Ward Member grants giving an overall budget of £30,000. Half of this budget was funded from the revenue budget with the remaining £15,000 being for the one year pilot and funded from the New Homes Bonus. (Minute POL.716)
- 3.7 Ward Member Grant Review**
- 3.7.1 This was undertaken on 8th March 2017 by Lead Member for Communities, Cllr Linda Brockbank, Chief Executive, Paul Shevlin and Communications and Partnerships Manager, Sharon Hudson.
- 3.7.2 From a total pot of £30K, £26,465.62 has been allocated and £3,534.38 remains. A full list of the projects to receive funding is given in Appendix A.
- 3.7.3 Compared to the Community Grants programme there has been a better geographical spread of projects across the district receiving funding. Every ward in the district has benefited from the funding. More grass roots type projects have received funding who wouldn't necessarily have applied to the Community Grants pot in the past. One example being Long Preston Girl Guides Association who received funding for a new tent.
- 3.7.4 Before implementing the scheme it was hoped that the administrative burden on Council officers would be kept to a minimum but greater officer input was needed than initially thought, involving members of the Business Support Team, Comms and Partnerships Manager and Partnerships Officer.
- 3.7.5 Observations from Pilot

- Average amount singularly awarded - £344
- No of projects to receive funding - 55
- No of projects to receive funding from more than one member – 19
- No of Projects with Craven wide reach – 5

3.7.6 The most funding awarded to any one project - £1,900 for Studio 1 animation workshops. Every member was approached about this project and this illustrated the need to amend the application form if applicants were going to approach more than one member. It also highlighted the need for a simple a mechanism to safeguard against projects potentially receiving a bigger than usual pot of funding by approaching all councillors. It is therefore recommended that a maximum funding cap of £2k that be introduced. This will now be stated on the application form.

3.7.7 Funding spread

Type of Project	Amount of funding awarded
Playground type projects	£3,050 (12%)
Sports Projects	£3,900 (15%)
Arts Projects	£7,094.80 (27%)
Community Buildings/Infrastructure projects	£8,115.82 (31%)

Funding has been allocated in every ward in the district and compared to the Community Grants scheme there has been a much more even spread of funding. A comparison can be found at Appendix B.

3.7.8 Recommendations from Review

- Introduce a maximum funding cap of £2k.
- Monitoring form to include a question to establish if the funding was used to attract further match funding. This will enable an assessment of added value to be collated, which can be compared to the Community Grants scheme.
- Underspend from first year pilot to be reallocated equally across all Councillors in the next financial year as discussed and agreed with group leaders.
- Include two minor amendments to the application form to help with administration; have Councillors print as well as sign name and include box for applicant to state if sending application to more than one CDC member. Example is given in Appendix C.

4. Implications

4.1 **Financial Implications**

£15k has been included in the revenue budget for 2017-18 for the Ward Member Grants Programme.

£15k funded from the New Homes Bonus. Please note this funding is time limited and will only continue whilst the Council continues to receive New Homes Bonus.

4.2 **Legal Implications** – The Council is empowered under the Localism Act 2011 (General Power of Competence) to authorise expenditure benefiting local communities.

4.3 **Contribution to Council Priorities** – Ward Member Grants contributes to the Corporate Priority Resilient Communities.

4.4 **Risk Management**

Members may become more likely to receive allegations or complaints against them of misuse of public money. The risk can be mitigated by each member:

- Ensuring the criteria is followed
- Sharing knowledge and information with other members
- Considering the perception some people may have of a decision
- Considering how a decision enhances, not detracts from the Council's reputation.
- Avoiding making funding decision at pre election periods as stated in application process

4.5 **Equality Analysis**

The Council's Equality Impact Assessment Procedure **has been** followed. An Equality Impact Assessment **has not** been completed on the proposals as completion of **Stage 1- Initial Screening** of the Procedure when first taken to Members in 2016-17 identified that the proposed policy, strategy, procedure or function **does not have** the potential to cause negative impact or discriminate against different groups in the community based on •age • disability •gender • race/ethnicity • religion or religious belief (faith) •sexual orientation, or • rural isolation,

6. **Access to Information : Background Documents** – N/A

7. **Author of the Report** – Sharon Hudson, Communications and Partnerships Manager Email: shudson@cravenc.gov.uk Tel No: 01756 706246

Note : Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

8. **Appendices**

Appendix A – Projects across Craven to be awarded funding

Appendix B – Comparison of Community Grant spend v Ward Member Grant Distribution

Appendix C – Ward Member Grant Application Form