

Board/Committee:	Policy and Organisation Board
Date of Meeting:	30 November 2022
Title:	Formation of a Grants Sub-Board
Author:	Manager of Planning Policy
Status:	For Decision

PURPOSE

To seek Members' approval for the formation of a Grants Sub-Board, which will administer the spending of community grants.

RECOMMENDATION

That this Board:

- Approves the formation of a Grants Sub-Board.
- Delegates authority to the Head of Planning and Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to determine the detailed elements of each grant including application forms and guidance.
- Recommends to Full Council that it approves amendments to the Constitution to give effect to this resolution.

1 Background

1.1 Members will recall that the Council has agreed to make provision for £200,000 in the capital budget for grants for heritage projects. This relates well with the Council's status as a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and associated projects as well as the High Street HAZ. It is envisaged that this funding could be used for:

- repairs to the fabric and roof of a heritage asset;
- restoration of historic feature;
- removal of unsightly and/or non-historic features;
- landscaping sympathetic to the setting of a heritage asset;
- the interpretation of historic features.

1.2 Members will also recall at the Policy and Organisation Board of 28th September 2022 it was resolved that the Council should manage the distribution of the neighbourhood proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and end the previous arrangement with Gosport Voluntary Action (GVA). According to the CIL Regulations, the neighbourhood portion of CIL (15% of the total CIL funding received from developers) should be spent to 'support the development of the area' through funding:

- the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance

of infrastructure; or

- anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.¹

1.3 As of 1st November 2022 there was £62,990 available in the CIL Neighbourhood Fund.

1.4 It is also proposed that funding of £10,000 for the community element of the grant scheme in 2022/23 comes from savings made in the current year. Future funding for the community element of the grant scheme in 2023/24 will be included in the Council's revenue budget for the 2023/24 financial year.

2 Grants Sub-Board

2.1 In order to provide a transparent, accountable and democratic mechanism to distribute the funding from the various sources to the community it is recommended that a Grants Sub-Board be set up.

2.2 This Sub-Board would sit beneath the Policy and Organisation Board and be composed of 5 numbers of members, selected from the respective parties in the same way as the Standards and Audit Sub-Board, namely representation would be provided by 3 Liberal Democrats, 1 Conservative and 1 Labour.

2.3 To formalise the creation of a Grants Sub-Board, amendments will need to be made to the Borough Council's constitution, and terms of reference drawn up, to be approved by Full Council.

2.4 When considering bids for funding, it is proposed that the Grants Sub-Board will meet six times a year. This will enable grants to be considered on an on-going basis throughout the year. It is proposed that grants would be a minimum of £500 to allow small projects to be considered. Maximum bid details will need to be considered further and this could reflect the amount of funding available from each source.

2.5 Upon receiving the bids Council officers will need to carry out an initial assessment to ensure the paperwork has been correctly submitted and carry out due diligence on any financial workings or quotes submitted. Once completed, officers will make recommendations to Members through the Grants Sub-Board.

3 Next steps

3.1 It is proposed that the details of the grant scheme is delegated to the Head of Planning and Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council. This detail will need to include:

¹ Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), reg. 59F

- Qualifying criteria for the funding. This is likely to include different criteria for different funding sources, particularly in relation to the restrictions on the CIL neighbourhood portion which needs to accord with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)
- Detailed application forms that enables officers and Members to understand:
 - the nature of the project;
 - the benefits it provides;
 - the cost breakdown of the project;
 - whether any match funding is available;
 - that sufficient information is provided to carry out financial due diligence;
 - whether the organisation has suitable safeguarding, equality and diversity provisions in place;
 - whether planning or other consents are required; and
 - other relevant information to be determined.
- Guidance notes to help applicants complete the form.
- Terms and conditions of the grants
- Payment request forms
- Change of scope forms
- Publicity arrangements for the promotion of the grant scheme as well as the award and completion of projects
- End of project report details and measures to ensure the work has been completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

3.2 The Council has previous examples of application forms, guidance notes and other supporting documentation which can provide the basis for templates for this work. A supporting webpage would also need to be set up on the Council's website in order to host the scheme.

4 Risk Assessment

4.1 It is necessary for the CIL funds to be used in accordance with the latest CIL Regulations and any use of CIL Strategic Funds will be required to accord with the items on the Council's submitted 123 List which was used as evidence at a public examination to justify the Council's CIL Charging Schedule. All CIL expenditure is required to be reported as part of the CIL Annual Financial Statement to meet Government requirements and this is incorporated into the Council's annual Infrastructure Funding Statement.

4.2 There is a risk that any grant given out by the Council could be wasted or misused. The risk of this will be lessened through the process which will include an initial officer assessment and due diligence, as well as the Sub-Board evaluation. Individuals' and organisations' prior history with the Council will be considered to ensure they are in good financial standing and are not a reputational risk. All successful applicants will be required to sign a grant contract to deliver the submitted project, with any changes having to be agreed first with the Council via a Change of Scope Form. This would give the Council the ability to recover funds, if required. Notwithstanding these precautions an element of risk will still remain for

any grant funding.

Financial Services comments:	As contained in para 1.4 of the report
Legal Services comments:	Contained within the report.
Equality and Diversity:	Organisations applying for funding will need to demonstrate that they have appropriate policies in place.
Climate Change:	By repairing buildings and enhancing their performance, the CIL neighbourhood portion and heritage fund may improve the energy efficiency of buildings in the long-term, reducing the impact of climate change. In the short-term, building works often create additional emissions.
Crime and Disorder	By enhancing buildings, infrastructure and public space, the CIL neighbourhood portion and the heritage funding may contribute towards reduced opportunities for crime and disorder.
Council Plan:	The proposal will assist the strategic priorities of the Council Plan by providing infrastructure and heritage funding which can raise aspirations, enhance the environment, develop the economy, empower residents and assist with delivering effective services.
Risk Assessment:	See Section 4
Background papers:	Economic Development Board Reports and accompanying appendices for the 28 th September 2022, 22 nd September 2021, 23 rd September 2020, 3 rd July 2019 and 14 th November 2018.
Appendices	None
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