

# **Report to Local Councils' Liaison Committee**

**Date of meeting: 11 March 2019**



**Subject: Community Grant Aid Scheme**

**Officer contact for further information:** G. Gold, Assistant Community Health & Wellbeing Manager (01992 564247)

**Democratic Services Officer:** V. Messenger (01992 564265)

---

## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**To note the operation of the Council's community grant aid application processes.**

1. Epping Forest District Council awards grants to organisations involved in providing community work, cultural or sport activities to support these organisations to deliver successful services to residents of the Epping Forest district. The organisations eligible for a grant include the following:
  - local voluntary and community groups;
  - sports clubs;
  - arts and culture groups;
  - trusts;
  - social enterprises; and
  - community interest groups.
2. A budget of £83,450 is set aside each year and priority is given to those groups delivering Council objectives and targets. Key priority areas encompass the following:
  - children and young people;
  - safer communities and the prevention of crime;
  - environmental projects – protection of local heritage and improvement of local environment;
  - community engagement;
  - older people;
  - disadvantaged and/or disabled;
  - improving quality of life; encouraging healthy and active lifestyles;
  - encouraging residents to participate in sports, leisure and cultural activities;
  - promoting independence;
  - community activities; use of local facilities;
  - domestic abuse; and
  - rural and social isolation.

## **Who can apply?**

3. Community-based organisations within the Epping Forest District, which operate for the benefit of residents of the district. Priority is given to groups, which meet the following criteria:
  - charitable and/or non-profit making;
  - based, or active, in the Epping Forest District;

- provide services to meet key needs within the district;
- non-political;
- can show clear aims and objectives and effective strategies for achieving these;
- have considered alternative funding sources or put forward schemes as part of 'match' funding proposals;
- are able to show a clear need for financial support;
- have a bank or building account in the name of the applicant organisation.

### **How to apply?**

4. To apply for a grant, applicants must complete and sign the application form giving as much information as possible. In addition, the application must be accompanied by:
  - a copy of the organisations most recent accounts and balance statement (essential);
  - a copy of the organisations Safeguarding Policy & Procedure (essential);
  - a copy of the organisations constitution (essential);
  - an estimate of costs (essential);
  - a business Plan (if applicable);
  - appropriate plans/pictorial description of project (if applicable); and
  - an application supporting statement/document (desirable).

### **Decision Making**

5. Applications are acknowledged on receipt and any further information required is requested.
6. Grant Aid applications are considered by the Council's Portfolio Holder for Community & Partnerships, following discussions with Council Officers and local partners. The initial consideration by the Portfolio Holder is usually within six to eight weeks of the receipt of the application. Portfolio Holder decision meeting arrangements for 2019/20 are as follows:
  - 30 April 2019;
  - 30 July 2019;
  - 29 October 2019; and
  - 28 January 2020.
7. Applications must be received no later than three weeks before the meeting date to be considered at this meeting. The Portfolio Holder will decide whether to approve (subject to certain conditions in some instances), refuse or defer pending the receipt of further information. The applicant is advised of any additional information required to make a decision. Once the information has been supplied by the applicant, the application is reconsidered.
8. Once a decision has been made there is a 'call-in' period, of approximately four weeks, whereby Councillor's have the right to 'call-in' the decision made. We then write to confirm the decision made and, if successful, we will request invoices or/and receipts before payment is made. For larger projects we may request evidence that work has commenced, before releasing funding.
9. If a grant is refused the applicant will be informed of the reason. If it is a case of reapplication we will assist where possible and give information about partners and funding opportunities that may help, such as Voluntary Action Epping Forest or Local Town and Parish Council Grant Schemes.
10. At the very most, the complete process, from receipt of the application to the final decision, would be approximately four months. Most applications are decided well within that time span.

**Factors considered when making decisions:**

- the number of local residents benefiting;
- the quality of the service or project;
- the amount of money the organisation already has and how they plan to use this;
- any other financial commitments the organisation have;
- how good the organisation is at fundraising;
- the submission of applications to other funding bodies (e.g. Essex Community Foundation) in appropriate cases and their chances of being given grants by those other bodies;
- whether the organisation has planning permission and building regulation approval (where these are needed);
- the number of volunteers;
- the support of local town or parish council;
- community support;
- the intended impact of the project on the district; and
- the benefits of the project against costs.

**Local Councils Grant Aid Schemes**

11. All town and parish councils in the Epping Forest district are sent information on the scheme at the start of each financial year. Local councils are asked to support the promotion of the scheme by displaying/sending out flyers, uploading information on website/social media and/or writing an article in local magazine.
12. All applicants are encouraged to contact their local town or parish council to make them aware of project/service plans, ask for funding and ask for support either financially (to assist with match funding) or in-kind such as free use of venue etc.
13. When applicants contact the Council for advice looking for alternative funding, town and parish councils are the first partners which we signpost them to, along with Voluntary Action Epping Forest. Town and parish councils are sent press articles promoting grants awarded and ask to promote this using their networks. Please advise of any changes/amendments required for distribution.