

TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

LEADER: Cllr Jeremy Christophers

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr John Goodey

DATE: 5 March 2019

REPORT OF: Business Improvement & Development Team

SUBJECT: Cllrs Community Fund 2019-2020

PART I
(Not exempt and confidential)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is recommended to agree the changes below, to be implemented in the new financial year.

This report will go to Overview & Scrutiny 4 March 2019 and its comments will be reported. All councillors have been given an opportunity to give their views in a survey (Appendix A). The results have been incorporated into this report.

Resolve

That

1. PURPOSE

Your agreement on the changes below is sought, to be implemented in the new financial year.

- Stop carry forward of funds into the next financial year in Election years with immediate effect.
- Any underspend on grants within the current financial year 2018-2019 could be allocated to the Crowdfunding initiative; this would allow community groups to access any residual funds.
- Fund administration: seek to find a more streamlined method of submitting requests. For example, an application could be submitted automatically to the grant co-ordinator, with a copy to the ward councillor, who could then sanction the application by email. This will reduce paperwork and speed up response. Up to date spreadsheet of allowances remaining to be held on the website.

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2. BACKGROUND

For the last ten years the fund has been administered by Democratic Services, the fund is now managed within the Business Improvement and Development team.

Following a review into the operation of this fund a number of problems with this grant scheme have been identified.

A major issue is that it generates too many applications for small grants which result in an unjustifiable amount of admin time.

For example, 46 Cllrs receive £1,500 each.

If £50 is granted per application this equates to 30 applications per Cllr.

If all the Cllrs did this it equates to 1,380 applications.

Roll over of unspent funds year by year adds to this figure. The amount of applications is also increased by split funding – for example, two Ward Cllrs giving £50 each to the same project.

Between May – Nov 2018 there were 133 applications – on average more than all other TDC grant funds. Although the average amount awarded was £ 270 this still had a significant impact on administration resource within the team.

OTHER ISSUES

- Applications are not signed properly and declarations of interest are often missing. This causes more time to spent chasing up and asking for additional information.
- Lack of details are provided about the project that also results in time spent requesting information.
- Allowing funds to roll over year after year creates an excess of money within our accounts. Some Cllrs do not award grants in a timely fashion, this does not support the community to which the purpose of the grant is aimed.
- There is currently a large underspend that Cllrs should be allocating prior to purdah, any allocations need to be made prior to Friday 1 March. This has recently been circulated through the MNL.
- Owing to the forthcoming May elections it is not viable to carry forward funds into the next financial year as there will be potential changes of Cllrs.
- Many events or initiatives are funded year after year without further justification. Some community groups therefore come to rely on this as an income stream and have become complacent about operating in sustainable way.
This also reduces the opportunity for new projects to receive funding.
- The process generates lots of enquiries from Cllrs such as, “*How much have I got left?*” or “*Has this application been paid yet?*” Again, this results in admin support having to complete ad-hoc requests.
- At present the process does not lend itself to an on-line application because the process calls for the Cllrs to recommend the grant and declare any interest.

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3. MAIN IMPLICATIONS

The implications that Members need to be aware of are as follows:

- Communities will need to adapt to a revised scheme.

4. GROUPS CONSULTED

Overview & Scrutiny

All Councillors were sent a survey seeking their views on changes to this fund (results in Appendix A)

5. TIME-SCALE

The revised scheme, subject to agreement could be introduced for the new financial year.

6. JUSTIFICATION

The changes will enable community groups to access funding in a timely and fair manner. Changes in managing the fund will also mean that resources can be better planned and the fund will be run in a more efficient manner.

7. DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION (CONFIRMATION OF DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL-IN)

10.00 a.m. on 12 March 2019

Kay O'Flaherty

**Business Improvement
Development Team Leader**

and

Cllr John Goodey

**Portfolio Holder for Communities and
Neighbourhoods**

BELOW TO BE FILLED IN BY REPORT AUTHOR:

Wards affected	All
Contact for any more information	Kay O'Flaherty
Background Papers (For Part I reports only)	
Key Decision	Y / N
In Forward Plan	Y / N
In O&S Work Programme	Y / N
Community Impact Assessment attached:	Y / N
Appendices attached:	A: Cllr Community Funds Review -Survey B: title etc

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	Appendix A Cllr Community Funds Review – survey.	Survey Results 23 surveys returned
Q1	Do you agree there will be no carry forward of funds in to the next financial year?	Yes 12 No 11 Almost a 50% split Could keep the same except in an election year where there would be no carry over.
Q2	Do you agree any underspend on grants within the financial year be allocated to Teignbridge10 Strong Communities	Yes 10 No 13 The no's have it
Q3	Do you agree there should be a minimum grant of £200, with the option of multiples of £100 in addition?	Yes 2 No 21 No change
Q4	Do you agree not to fund the same projects as were put forward in a previous year?	Yes 8 No 15 No Change
Q5	<p>Additional comments <i>There were 8 comments, along the lines of works well as it is. If it's not broken don't fix it</i></p> <p>Other suggestions : <i>Give each councillor a book of 2 x £50 vouchers each year that they can issue themselves to authorised recipients with each councillor required to justify how they have been used each year. All TDC would need to do is validate the voucher recipient and send payment</i></p> <p><i>Publish a spreadsheet on the website with details of our grants, updated monthly. It would help if we were copied into the email confirming the award.</i></p> <p><i>Only that the fund should be increased./ It has remained at £1,500 since the start.</i></p> <p><i>Not sure, what projects would be funded by allocating funding to Teignbridge Strong Communities. Initial proposal had been for money to go to Crowdfunding initiatives, which I might be happy with. They would need to be projects that benefited Newton Abbot. Exception could be where a Cllr is saving money for a bigger project, but they would need to identify project. I would agree to a</i></p>	

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	<p><i>£100 min grant, but don't see need for multiples after that, since that has no relevance to admin time. Don't see need to restrict who receives funding, since it is surprisingly difficult to spend funds anyway.</i></p>	
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