

**CABINET
20 JULY 2021**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY GRANTS POLICY REVIEW, NHDC FUNDING CRITERIA HEALTH PROTECTION BOARD COMMUNITY USE; & REVIEW OF CABINET PANELS' TERM OF REFERENCE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - LEGAL AND COMMUNITY, AND THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL PRIORITY: WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE AND EFFICIENT COUNCIL

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides:

- 1.1. An overview for the Grants awarded in the previous civic year following the revision of the Community Grants policy and criteria and suggested amendments;
- 1.2. Suggested Protocol for application and award of the recent Health Protection Board Funding of £100K;
- 1.3. Suggested updated terms of reference for all 4 Cabinet Panels.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Cabinet consider the following revisions of the Grant Policy criteria as set out below under section Two for eligibility of organisation (Appendix A) for approval:

Paragraph F – ‘ be able to demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered and exhausted before application to the district council’.

Paragraph G – ‘ be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides ‘Additionality’ to the service provision of the organisation (i.e. is innovative in nature and beyond the normal scope of organisation’s current activities).

- 2.3 That Cabinet approves the Protocol for the NHDC / Health Protection Board Funding (Appendix B) and approve the amendments to the District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel (Appendix C); and
- 2.4 That Cabinet reviews the Cabinet Panel terms of reference and approves these amendments (Appendices D, E & F) or such other amendments as are deemed appropriate.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Reviewing the new Protocol or revised criteria that have been put in place on a regular basis, provides the Council with assurances that the grant process achieves its stated aim, that the revised criteria has made the funding more accessible to a wider range of organisations who are working to support the community work in North Hertfordshire. with vulnerable people or people of protected characteristics.
- 3.2 The NHDC/ Health Protection Board ('HPB') Funding detailed, has been secured and must be used by the end of March 2022. It is proposed that this is to be considered by the District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel, whose terms of reference therefore should be updated to reflect remit.
- 3.3 The Administration has requested a review of the three other Cabinet Panels to align to the Council's renewed priorities.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no alternative options to be considered.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant officers in Legal, Finance, Policy and Community Engagement.
- 5.2 Consultation has taken place with Policy & Community Engagement team, the Executive Members and Deputy Executive Members for Community Engagement, and need to update the District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel.
- 5.3 The Leader and Deputy Leader have requested a review of the three remaining Cabinet Panels and all other Executive and Deputies were made aware of this by the Leader.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation (2.1-2.3) on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 14 November 2020. The review of the remaining Cabinet Panel's terms of reference relates to name change, portfolios alignments and minor clarifications, and is not a key Executive decision (and not therefore required to be specifically addressed in the Forward Plan).

7. BACKGROUND Grants Policy

- 7.1. Before the introduction of the amended Policy in January 2020, the Grant Policy was last reviewed in late 2015 / agreed by Cabinet in June 2016. A review has been undertaken to see how the new Policy has been operating. As a result, the amendments to the Policy have been proposed.

NHDC /HPB Funding Protocol

- 7.2. In May 2021 a joint application was successfully made to the HPB by Dacorum, Hertsmere, East Herts, NHDC, Stevenage, Broxbourne, Welwyn Hatfield, Watford and Three Rivers for community group funding. NHDC secured £100K. The funding needs to be committed/ spent by March 2022.

District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel terms of reference

- 7.3. It is proposed that this Panel will consider the NHDC/ HPB funding applications and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community Engagement. The terms of reference for that Panel therefore need to be updated.

Cabinet Panels: (Environment; Community Engagement, Enterprise and Co-operative Development; Housing, Strategic Planning and Transport)

- 7.4. Three Cabinet Panels were established in 2019/20; in 2019 Environment and the other two in 2020 as part of the Constitutional review. Some amendments were made to the terms of reference by Cabinet in June 2020.
- 7.5. Post-election in May 2021, the Administration has expressed a desire to revisit the terms of reference.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS Grants Policy

- 8.1 The revised criteria has allowed for a wider range of organisations to apply for a community grant in the last year. It is anticipated that when the impact of the pandemic has subsided that other groups will apply for funding in future years.
- 8.2 It is proposed that the two amendments are made to the current criteria. The amendments are to clarify the conditions under which the Council consider Area Committee funding. Currently Section 2 Eligibility Criteria states at paragraph F, that organisations should “*be able to demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered*”. It proposed that this is amended to the following – “***be able to demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered and exhausted before application to the District Council***”. Some organisations are able to raise funds through precepts, levies or other fund-raising activities.
- 8.3 Paragraph G. states – “*be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides additionality to the service provision of the organisation*”. It is proposed that this paragraph be amended to read – “***be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides additionality to the service provision of the organisation (i.e. is innovative in nature and beyond the normal scope of organisation’s current activities)***”. This provides further clarity as when referring to ‘additionality’ to service provision.

NHDC/ HPB funding Protocol and amendment to the District wide Panel's terms of reference:

- 8.4 As per Appendix B, the funding was provided to NHDC to distribute to community groups for specific HPB criteria (detailed as 6 & 7). The funding is to support organisations which were directly involved in service delivery to /prevention of the impact of Covid-19 on North Hertfordshire residents, but are now facing financial difficulties. The funding is to provide notional *retrospective* funding to support these organisations. The fund for these organisations will seek to ensure that they remain viable and sustainable as they deliver on-going support to residents affected by the pandemic. The HPB funding is therefore restricted, in that it will relate to the organisations rather than the projects that they provide. It is proposed that the Panel will consider these applications, which as detailed in the Protocol (to reflect the HPB requirements) will be applications that include e.g., a contribution to running costs such as rent, rates, insurance, PPE and other Covid-19 compliant infrastructure. Specific amounts and costings must be provided for all of the above.
- 8.5 The amendments to the terms of reference for this Panel are set out as tracked changes in Appendix C.

Cabinet Panels:

- 8.6 The amendments to the terms of reference relate to the changing of name for two of the Panels, aligning Chair and Vice Chair to the revised portfolios and making it clear that stakeholders, or Members not on a Panel may be invited to present. These are set out in Appendices D,E & F, with the proposed names of 'Environment', 'Community' and 'Place'. All Members appointed to those previously named Panels would continue as Members of the newly named Panels as before.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Area Committees' have delegated Executive Grants functions under section 9E (2)(iv) but these may also be discharged by the Senior Executive Member as per (2)(a) and (ii) the Executive Member.
- 9.2 Section 9.1 of the constitution states that 'Area Committees must operate within Council policy and decisions must be consistent with the Budget and Policy framework and service specific policies.'
- In order to promote close working with our communities there are five Area Committees which cover different geographical areas of the district. The Area Committees are given substantial powers and responsibilities, within the parameters of the policies set by the Council and Cabinet and as set out in the terms of reference, including the ability to consider and report to Cabinet and Council on any matter affecting their area. Area Committees must operate within Council policy and decisions must be consistent with the Budget and Policy framework and service specific policies.
- 9.3 Section 9.3 of the Constitution sets the delegations as the following – 'The Council and Cabinet will include details of the delegations to Area Committees. The delegations to Area Committees will include budgets for the purpose of providing grants and discretionary budgets that may be used within the area of the Committee for economic, social and environmental well-being.

Section 9.8 sets the Terms of Reference for the Area Committees as:

9.8.1 Policy - exercise of decisions by resolution - (in relation to the budgets)

- (a) To allocate discretionary budgets within the terms determined by the Council.
- (b) To allocate devolved budgets and activities within the terms determined by the Council.

9.4 9.8.2 and 14.6.8 (b) (iii) of the Constitution provide delegations to: 'The Executive Member for Community Engagement, having consulted the Chair or Vice Chair of the relevant Area Committee, or where no Chair or Vice Chair – the Members of the Area Committee by majority or those responding, or confirming via virtual means, and Service Director: Legal and Community; of on recommendation of Grants Panel'.

9.5 The Cabinet has Panels that are advisory and has the remit to update their terms of reference.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the amendments to the grant criteria, and the Area Committee grants budget will remain at £42k in 2021/22. The amendments seek to make best use of council revenue by funding appropriate district voluntary and community sector organisations projects which increase local impact. In 2020/21 there was an additional £10k District-wide budget, which has now concluded.

10.2 During 2020/21, additional funding was made available from the Special Reserve to provide funding to community groups that were providing support in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Securing the additional £100k revenue funding from the Health Protection Board will replace the Special Reserve fund going forward. This additional pot of funding will seek to provide additional support whilst the impact of the pandemic is still being felt.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are no direct risk implications arising from the changes highlighted in the report. The recommendations seek to improve governance arrangements relating to grant funding and to maximise the opportunities for relevant grant processes to achieve their stated objectives.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 For organisations to be compliant with both the current grant criteria they must demonstrate an open-door membership policy and provide services that are accessible to all. This does not preclude single-gender organisations from applying as long as they can demonstrate that they comply with the Equality Act 2010.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no direct human resource implications relating to this report.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix A – Grants Policy Amended

16.2 Appendix B – NHDC/ HPB Funding Protocol

16.3 Appendix C - District Wide Community Facilities Capital & Revenue Grants Panel Terms of Reference Amended.

16.4 Appendix D – Cabinet Panel Environment Panel Terms of Reference Amended.

16.5 Appendix E - Community Engagement, Enterprise and Co-operative Development, as described ‘Community’ Terms of Reference as Amended;

16.6 Appendix F - Housing, Strategic Planning and Transport, as described ‘Place’ Terms of Reference as Amended.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 None other than those indicated and linked in the documents and Appendices detailed.