

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES  
REGULATIONS 2014  
OFFICER DECISION WRITTEN RECORD

Subject matter:	East Herts Community Grants
Date of Decision:	20/3/2018
Exempt /Confidential information (Yes / No):	No
If Exempt/Confidential – reason why:	
Authorising Officer:	Jonathan Geall, Head of Housing and Health
Decision:	<b>PROPOSED CHANGES TO GRANTS PROGRAMME 18/19</b>
Reason(s) for Decision:	Improvements to the grants programme. See attached for more details.
Details of alternative options, if any, considered and rejected:	None
Name(s) of any Member who has declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision that is being taken under specific express authorisation:	None

## MEMORANDUM

To: Jonathan Geall – Head of Housing & Health  
From: Claire Pullen – Housing and Health Projects Officer  
Date: 14 March 2018

### PROPOSED CHANGES TO GRANTS PROGRAMME 18/19

#### Purpose/Summary of Report

To obtain approval for changes in the community grants allocation process

#### RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION: That approval is given to:

(A)	change the existing grant priorities to that proposed on page 9 in the attached policy; as per paragraph 2.3
(B)	amend the scoring process so the amount awarded can be less than the amount bid for on page 6 in policy; as per para 2.6-2.9
(C)	adjust the bidding timetable page 6 in policy; as per para 2.10

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 A discretionary grants policy with new priorities on health and wellbeing was approved at full council in July 1017. Part of this policy requires a review of the existing priorities and the theme of sporting excellence (Recommendation A). As per process, members of the Community Wellbeing Forum have been consulted.
- 1.2 A review of the new administrative processes has been conducted in this transitional year and has identified improvements (Recommendations B and C).

- 1.3 In 2018/19, the separate budget lines (community revenue, Performance to Excellence and summer activities) will be combined resulting in a total allocation of £45,000.
- 1.4 The policy also states that each year, the council will determine what percentage of the available budget will be distributed through a competitive application process. Up to 20% of the budget can be held back for events of national/local importance that are in accordance with agreed priorities or for applications with lower scores (as agreed with councilors).
- 2.0 Report
- 2.1 In 2017/18, 54 grants were allocated to outstanding young athletes, registered charities, town/parish councils, voluntary organisations and sports clubs. This is a decrease from the previous year and has reduced the time required to administer the service.
- 2.2 Recommendation A: At its meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018, the Members Community Wellbeing Forum reviewed the existing grant priorities and, after looking at the trends in allocations for the year, are satisfied that the grant priorities with the exception of PEX should remain the same.
- 2.3 Members reviewed PEX and recommended replacing it with a priority around widening access to sport and culture for children and young people. The reasons behind this decision are:
- Time for a change. PEX has been running for more than 30 years.
  - Better contributes to new grant aim of supporting those in greatest need
  - Ensures vulnerable children and those living with long-term conditions have access to broader opportunities
- 2.4 The grants awarded this year were focused around the more deprived areas which was the aim of the new policy and supported a broad range of projects.

- 2.5 The first funding round was oversubscribed and officers were able to select the bids that clearly contributed to the council's health and wellbeing priorities. Money was still available after grants were allocated to the highest scoring bids so officers implemented the new process of entering into a dialogue with lower scoring bids and proposing a grant with conditions. Both applicants eventually withdrew their request for a grant. While a disappointing result, this can be seen as a positive – demonstrating that the assessment process is now more selective in ensuring that funding is supporting agreed priorities. The rigorous assessment has resulted in an underspend but this is better than it being spent on projects that do not meet the required / desired criteria.
- 2.6 Recommendation B: Currently, the new process does not address the issue of part funding of applications. This is a concern because due to a decrease in resources for a number of the organisations applying for grants, we have noticed that there are more cross-district partnerships being established. A number of bids received were for county-wide projects or for those that could also potentially benefit residents of neighbouring districts.
- 2.7 In 2017/18, the above scenario occurred twice and officers were required to fully fund the requested amount. With limited funding available it is essential that grants are used to solely benefit East Herts residents.
- 2.8 Officers would like to be able to use their discretion and support high quality bids from larger organisations through awarding grants based on the proportion of East Herts residents who benefit. In situations when the budget is oversubscribed, this will be a valuable tool. Members of the Community Wellbeing Forum did not have time to discuss this issue.
- 2.9 The proposed change will enable officers to select specific elements of the bid that more clearly achieve health and wellbeing outcomes.
- 2.10 Recommendation C: In terms of administration, the current policy states that there are two funding rounds: one in September, one in December. Officers propose a more general schedule of spring and autumn. Members of the

Community Wellbeing Forum have agreed to this. The reasons for this change are:

- Enables flexibility, every other year could open earlier so that organisations are awarded a grant in time to plan an activity for children during the summer holidays
- Organisations who are requesting a grant for building work can do it in the off season
- Fewer capital projects will continue into the next financial year

2.11 Appendix A is a copy of the grants policy with the proposed changes highlighted.

2.12 The Head of Housing and Health has the authority to approve grants under Item 3c, Responsibility for Functions – Section C, paragraph 6.1, article 6.1.3 of the council's Constitution which states:

*THE FOLLOWING DELEGATIONS APPLY TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DIRECTORS, HEADS OF SERVICE OR THEIR DULY AUTHORISED OFFICERS... Powers to incur capital and revenue expenditure, to seek recovery of amounts owed, to exercise discretion in recovery, alter or waive repayment periods or approve exemptions in relation to repayments, agree refunds, reduce or remit payments and waive fines, except as detailed in the Financial Regulations and Procurement Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.*

### Record of decision

The recommendations in this report is approved / ~~rejected / deleted~~ as appropriate]

Name: Bjartnar Geau

Signature: 

Date: 21/3/18

### Member consultation

In agreement with the recommendation in this report / ~~not in agreement with the recommendation~~ [deleted as appropriate]

Name: Eric Buckmaster

Signature: 

Date: 20th march 2018

## **APPENDIX 1: Discretionary Community Grants Policy**

East Herts Council will grant aid eligible voluntary and community groups, town/parish councils, and not-for-profit organisations that deliver projects or activities that improve health and wellbeing outcomes for residents in East Herts. It will work with Councillors to identify and agree potential themes for grants spending on an annual basis.

**Eligibility:** Every organisation that meets these basic eligibility criteria will be able to apply for a grant:

- Situated or delivered in the East Herts district area which includes Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford, Hertford, Ware and the surrounding villages. If you are unsure if your project is in our area, please contact us.
- Financially viable with its own bank account that requires two unrelated people to authorise cheques and make withdrawals. This must be in the name of the organisation applying.
- Have an open-door membership policy and provide services that are accessible to people from all backgrounds. This does not preclude single-gender organisations from applying as long as they can demonstrate - if asked - that they comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- Be volunteer led or operated on a not-for-profit basis.
- Have good governance in place including a management committee/board of directors that includes at least three unrelated individuals
- Can demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered.
- Have endorsement from an East Herts Councillor representing the area from which most of the residents who benefit from the project/activity come. In cases where an East Herts Councillor is a member of the bidding organisation and there is no other ward member, then the East Herts Executive Member for Housing and Health may endorse the application.

**If a project involves work on a building or outdoor space the applicant must:**

- Own the freehold of the land or building or a lease that cannot be brought to an end by the landlord for at least five years after the work has been completed
- Have the relevant permissions in place (for example planning consent, permission from owner).

**Priorities eligibility:** Applications must evidence that the money will directly (in the case of revenue bids), or indirectly (in the case of capital) support at least one outcome identified and publicised each year. Priorities and special themes will be identified annually in a separate Appendix.

**Grants may be made for:**

- Building works or green space improvements – we will count this as capital funding.
- Large items of sports or play equipment – we will count this as capital funding.

- Operational costs of a specific project or activity including purchase of small items of equipment, stationary and the like – we will count this as revenue funding.

The maximum grant for capital funding (principally improvements to buildings/open space or equipment) is £8,000. We will not fund projects that have already started though we may fund a later stage of a building project which is not dependent on an earlier stage. The council will look for innovative projects.

The maximum grant for revenue funding (operational costs) is £3,000. The council will have discretion to consider larger revenue grants on a case-by-case basis. The presumption, however, is that such grants would only be awarded for long-term interventions (over a minimum six weeks' duration) that will clearly result in health behaviour change. The council will have the discretion to award less than the amount bid for. This could include but is not limited to situations below:

- Partial eligibility; a proportion of beneficiaries are outside the district
- Where negotiations on budgets have occurred

**East Herts Council will not provide grants for:**

- purchase of medical equipment
- promotion of a particular religion or political belief
- a service that the state is obligated to provide
- land or building where ownership (freehold or eligible lease) is not yet established.
- purchase of items on behalf of another
- VAT that can be recovered

**Allocation process**

All requests for funding must be submitted on the council's application form and contain all the required documentation (Appendix x). There will be two bidding windows each year. The first application deadline will be in the spring and the second in the autumn. Each application tranche will relate to half of the total pot of grants funding which will be allocated in that tranche. All applications will be judged together, relative to all other bids received during that bidding window.

The council will advertise and run an annual workshop with all eligible bidders making themselves known to the council.

**Assessment and scoring**

All applications for grant funding will be carefully assessed to ensure that funding is allocated to projects or activities and areas that will have the most impact on the council's priority areas.

The assessment process will use three main criteria:

- practical assessment at which time the following considerations, though not limited to these, will be addressed - will the funding be spent in East Herts, will it be spent in the financial year, is the applicant already in receipt of a grant, has the applicant consulted the wider community?
- priority assessment at which time the following considerations, though not limited to these, will be addressed - would making the grant help the council deliver the key priorities identified for that year?
- Financial assessment at which time the following considerations, though not limited to these, will be addressed - has a clear and convincing argument been made for the funding?

Scoring will be based on answers to the following application questions:

1. amount of match funding voluntarily committed or already raised (not a requirement, but those bids that have match funding will score more highly)
2. whether the project is being delivered in a disadvantaged areas of East Herts (Appendix 3)
3. number of people that will benefit
4. evidence that project/activity will realistically help the council deliver on at least one of its priorities/outcomes
5. evidence of financial need
6. evidence that consultation has taken place and the results support the application.

All applications will be scored in a fair and consistent manner against the same assessment criteria. The assessment will take place from a set date over an agreed period of time and all applications will be assessed during this period to ensure that they are judged on merit, in relation to each other. Applications will not be considered outside of the assessment window.

#### **Allocating funding – stage one**

All applications will be ranked in order of highest to lowest score. Funding will then be allocated to those applications receiving the highest scores. Each year, the council will determine what percentage of the available budget will be distributed in this way. Up to 20% of the budget can be held back for events of national or local importance (as agreed with councillors) which are in accordance with agreed priorities and criteria or for applications with lower scores

#### **Allocating funding – stage two**

Where there are a number of lower scoring applications with similar scores and there is still funding to allocate, the council may decide to enter into a dialogue with applicants to seek further in return for mutually agreed amendments to the project or activity. The council may seek one or more of



the following amendments to a lower scoring proposal as a condition of grant funding (note, this is not an exhaustive list):

- the applicant agrees to mentor volunteers in other groups so as to strengthen that group's capacity, resilience and/or ability to apply for a grant in their own right
- the applicant agrees to expand their activities/project to a nearby wards or area that is known to have a high level of income deprivation
- the applicant agrees to ensure that the activity/project will reach a minimum number of vulnerable residents or 'new' residents who would not been assumed to be involved or benefit given the terms of the application as submitted.

The council reserves the right to apply any of these conditions to any of the grants awarded under either stage one or stage two of funding allocation process.

**Member involvement in implementation**

All applicants will be asked to invite their ward member to the activity / event being funded or to view the project that has been funded.

Version: 14 March 2018

## **PRIORITIES FOR 2018/19**

The agreed priorities for discretionary grant funding for 2018/19 are listed below.

**Health** - physical activity and healthy nutrition, preventing and delaying the onset of illness, reducing obesity and keeping people healthy and active through:

- tackling social isolation – supporting those suffering from loneliness or social exclusion or those who find it difficult to interact the community
- supporting people who are tackling addictions
- enabling healthier lifestyles

**Income deprivation** (but not at the exclusion of supporting work that meets the other priorities in areas that do not suffer from deprivation):

- galvanising activities in areas with high levels of deprivation (capacity building)
- encouraging existing community groups and activities to deliver in disadvantaged areas of East Herts Appendix x

**Infrastructure** – Improving or maintaining community buildings and assets to ensure that communities have the infrastructure to support their residents, to galvanise community activities and to drive community cohesion

- creating safer and resilient neighbourhoods
- **Widening access to sport and culture for children and young people who are vulnerable or inactive**

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

- Councillor endorsement
- Bank statement showing current balance
- Copy of constitution / set of rules or charity commission number
- Copy of child protection policy (if your organisation works with children)
- Evidence of planning permission (if required)
- Name and contact details of main contacts, including chair, treasurer and secretary, in your organisation
- Two quotes for capital projects

## LIST OF TOP 10 MOST DEPRIVED WARDS IN EAST HERTS

Whilst East Hertfordshire as a whole ranks above the national average on the scale on Income Deprivation (IMD<sup>1</sup>), there are still certain wards that fall below the average IMD<sup>2</sup> ranking for both Hertfordshire and nationally.

Ward	Average IMD score for the ward	Ranking for IMD against all Hertfordshire wards (out of 690)
Much Hadham	16.3	46
Hertford Sele	14.7975	47
Mundens and Cottered	13.91	58
Hunsdon	11.635	78
Ware Trinity	10.98	80
BS Central	10.93166667	87
Braughing	10.295	88
Hertford Rural North	9.78	94
Hertford Rural South	9.67	95
Great Amwell	9.35	96

<sup>1</sup> The Indices of Deprivation 2015 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England, based on seven domains of deprivation. The domains were combined using the following weights to produce the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation:

- Income Deprivation (22.5%)
- Employment Deprivation (22.5%)
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (13.5%)
- Health Deprivation and Disability (13.5%)
- Crime (9.3%)
- Barriers to Housing and Services (9.3%)
- Living Environment Deprivation (9.3%)

In addition to the Index of Multiple Deprivation and the seven domain indices, there are two supplementary indices: the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index and the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index.

<sup>2</sup> IMD data is measured according to individual Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), however by taking the average IMD scores across the LSOA's within each ward we have calculated an average IMD score for each of the wards in East Herts.