

WEST BYFLEET NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

The West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum, established to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the residents of West Byfleet, has applied for revenue funding of £1,000 to cover the costs incurred by the Organisation, including public liability insurance, room hire, website management and printing costs. The Forum will continue to support the local residents, seeking to further the social, economic and environmental well-being of the West Byfleet area.

The Forum received initial a Government grant of £8,000 which has now been exhausted. No funds have been raised by the Forum and the bid to the Council seeks to cover all costs in the coming year. The applicant has advised that because of the great amount of work involved producing the Plan and a grant from Government, the Forum has not had to look to fund raise and do not view raising funds as an objective.

The Members of the Forum are to be congratulated on their achievements to-date, in particular the successful outcome of the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan Referendum held in October. However, the application does not provide sufficient justification for the Council to meet ongoing costs. It is also noted that the Forum has been unable to provide/meet the elements within the Community Grants Scheme’s key information.

The Forum is recommended to explore opportunities for self-funding, such as the introduction of a small annual membership charge £2.50 a year (which would raise over £1,000) or staging fund raising events throughout the year. To this end, it is recommended that the Forum approaches the other Neighbourhood Forums successfully established in the Borough, such as Byfleet, Hook Heath and Pyrford, to gain ideas from their funding work.

Recommendations

Reasons for Decision	The application does not meet the standards of the Community Grants Scheme and fails to provide sufficient justification for the Council to enter into ongoing revenue funding.
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The Executive is requested to:	RESOLVE That no grant be awarded.
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The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendation.

Background Papers:

2018/19 Application Form.

Reporting Person:

Sue Barham, Strategic Director
 Extn: 3810, Email: sue.barham@woking.gov.uk

Ray Morgan, Chief Executive
 Extn: 3333, Email: ray.morgan@woking.gov.uk

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Contact Person:

Frank Jeffrey, Democratic Services Manager
Extn: 3012, Email: frank.jeffrey@woking.gov.uk

Doug Davern, Democratic Services Officer
Extn: 3018, Email: doug.davern@woking.gov.uk

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Ayesha Azad
Email: Cllrayesha.azad@woking.gov.uk

Shadow Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Ian Eastwood
Email: cllrian.eastwood@woking.gov.uk

Date Published:

6 December 2017

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum was formed in 2013 when the Localism Act introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new developments in their particular area by developing Neighbourhood Development Plans.
1.2 Employees	None.
1.3 Volunteers	<p>14, whose activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ creating the Neighbourhood Plan and informing local residents and businesses of it purpose and aims; ○ organising meetings and ○ ensuring the aims and policies of the Plan are adhered to. <p>The volunteers arrange printing and leaflet drops, and attend fetes and open days, in order to inform residents and businesses of West Byfleet of any potential development in the village and the impact it could have on them.</p>
1.4 Clients/Users	None
1.5 Members	<p>410 members.</p> <p>The Forum maintains a website, at a cost, which is kept up to date with local information. The applicant has advised that, as there are some major planning applications pending for West Byfleet, it is considered important that residents are informed. The applicant has further stated that, in the event all the planning applications go forward, the number of homes in West Byfleet would increase by a third.</p> <p>The Forum has a membership secretary who maintains the membership list, sends out notices to members and residents to keep them up to date with local issues and planning applications.</p>
1.6 Sum Requested	£1,000 (Revenue)
1.7 Project	<p>To enable the Forum to continue effectively for another year, to hold regular meetings and to inform and update residents of any changes.</p> <p>The applicant has advised that when the Localism Act came into being the Forum was able to request £8,000 to cover set up costs and enable the Forum to develop the Neighbourhood Plan. This was a one off payment and has been used over the last 4 years when costs were at their highest.</p>
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<p>The cost breakdown provided indicates that the request for funding has been reached as follows:</p> <p>Public Liability Insurance £200 Website costs and email address £200, Printing costs £300 Hire of hall x 3 £150 Miscellaneous £200</p>

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1.9 Community Benefit	<p>The residents of West Byfleet have supported the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan. They have been well informed by leaflet drops, information in the public library and Health Centre. The Forum has also liaised with Altitude, which is redeveloping Sheer House, Octagon which wishes to redevelop Broadoaks, and West Hall Estates which would like to build on green belt land in the village.</p> <p>The applicant considers that, by funding the Forum, the Council would be aiding the residents and businesses of West Byfleet over the next few years when changes in West Byfleet would be at the most difficult for the residents and disruptive for all.</p>
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2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £200 in the bank. The sum of £ is reserved for the monthly fee of the website which at the moment is £11.88 a month.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2018 which shows an anticipated income of £933.68, covering room hire, website management, insurance printing costs and miscellaneous. No income is anticipated in the year.</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted a financial report for 2017 to-date which shows expenditure of £700.56, including public liability insurance (£195), room hire (£300) and website charges (£95). At the time of application, the Group held £279.80 in the bank. No income was received.</p>
2.3 Support over the past five years	<p>New Application.</p>

3.0 Assessment of Application		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution ○ Registered Charity ○ VAT Registered ○ Equal Opportunities Policy ○ Safeguarding Policy ○ Reserves Policy ○ Quality Mark ○ Other funding sources pursued ○ Other support by the Council ○ Fundraising ○ Two quotes ○ Regular monitoring provided previously 	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>
3.2 Consultee	<p><u>Officer Comment</u></p>	

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<p>Comments</p>	<p>Whilst the Forum is to be congratulated on its achievements to-date with the successful development and adoption of the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan, I consider there is insufficient information supplied within the application to justify the request. Bearing in mind the Forum received initial funding of £8,000, I note that sadly since that time they have not considered any further funding plan which in my view would have been prudent for them to do.</p> <p>I also note that they have not met many of the key criteria for grant award as highlighted in Section 3.1, and therefore I would encourage them to explore other opportunities for self-funding and also speak to other existing Neighbourhood Forums to gain ideas / share required documentation, as it is likely that any other funding provider will require such policy / guidance documents being in place prior to any award.</p>
<p>3.3 Assessment</p>	<p>The West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum was established to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the residents of West Byfleet. A referendum was held on 5 October 2017 on the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan and residents voted overwhelmingly to adopt the Plan. A report on the outcome of the Referendum will be considered by Council at its meeting on 7 December 2017.</p> <p>The purpose of the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum is to further the social, economic and environmental well-being of the West Byfleet area. The applicant has advised that the Forum encompasses both residents and businesses and seeks to advise them of forthcoming planning applications and new developments in the area.</p> <p>To further its objectives, the Forum works with a number of local organisations, including Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford Residents Association, Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum, West Byfleet Business Association, local Churches and local Schools.</p> <p>The Forum received initial funding of £8,000 from the Government and has now approached the Council to fund the costs of the Forum in future years. The initial funding has been used up and the Group has to-date not sought to generate any additional income, such as undertaking any fund raising or introducing a membership fee.</p> <p>The applicant has advised that, in view of the great amount of work involved producing the Plan and a grant from Government, the Forum has not had to look to fund raise and does not view raising funds as an objective.</p> <p>The funding of the Council would benefit the residents by enabling the Forum to continue to provide information on activities in the area. In considering the application, it should be noted that the budget provided is based on the 2018 calendar year, rather than the 2018/19 financial year; in view of their current financial information, it is possible that the Group will struggle with costs in the coming months as well as in 2018/19.</p> <p>The Forum is to be congratulated on its achievements to-date, and the successful development and adoption of the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan. However, it is not considered that the application provides sufficient justification for the Council to meet the ongoing costs of the Forum. It should also be noted the Forum has not been able to meet/provide the key information listed in Section 3.1.</p>

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It is felt that the Forum should explore opportunities for self-funding, such as a small annual membership charge or fund raising events throughout the year. To this end, it is recommended that the Forum approaches the other Neighbourhood Forums successfully established in the Borough, such as Byfleet, Hook Heath and Pyrford, to gain ideas from their funding work.

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