

APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary

Each year Woking Borough Council provides a significant level of support for the voluntary sector, varying from financial support to accommodation, from discretionary rate relief to Officer advice. Between the end of June and the beginning of September 2020 the Council invited local community and voluntary organisations to apply for funding for projects which demonstrate substantial community benefit for the residents of the Borough. As in previous years, the Council has received applications seeking support for a wide range of projects and events, all designed to benefit one or more of the many communities in the Borough over the coming financial year.

Each application has been carefully considered in light of the Council's criteria, priorities for the year, sustainability, community benefit and added value, with a detailed report drawn up on each of the applications. The reports set out the Officer recommendations which have been reached with a view to giving the greatest benefit to residents within the limited financial constraints faced by the Borough Council, taking into account comments from a range of consultees including Officers, Councillor Simon Ashall, Portfolio Holder for Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations, Councillor Will Forster, Shadow Portfolio Holder for Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations, and Councillor Ayesha Azad, Leader of the Council.

For the purposes of financial planning, the recommendations within the reports have been used to calculate the impact on the budget. Should the Members of the Executive wish to make any changes to the recommendations, the impact on the budgets may need to be taken into consideration to ensure that the budgets are not exceeded.

The recommendations and committed funding allocates £919,052 of the available revenue budget (£922,000). The recommendations utilise up to £158,014 of the Community Fund, resulting in a forecast balance of £13,841 in the Borough Council's Community Fund as at 31 March 2022.

In considering each of the applications, the Members of the Executive are advised to take into account a number of key standards when reaching a decision. These are set out in section 4.2 of the report and have been drawn up to assist in the determination of the funding requests.

The impact of Covid-19 cannot be ignored and this report seeks to set out the risks associated with the continuing implications of the lockdowns and social distancing restrictions on community groups, the residents they support and the Council's funding of those groups. In addition, each applicant was invited to set out the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on their services at the time of their application, details of which are outlined in each individual report.

The financial impact of Covid-19 on Woking Borough Council has been substantial and the Authority's overall budget for the coming year will need to take into account the anticipated shortfall. The draft budget is being drawn up and will be presented to Council in February 2021 for agreement. The grants budget for 2021/22 will be included in the overall budget report and at this stage Officers have applied the same budget levels adopted for 2020/21.

However, the financial position of the Council is such that the decision has been taken not to transfer an additional £100,000 into the capital fund for the coming year. Furthermore, the revenue budget may need to be significantly reduced as part of the Council's efforts to achieve savings. As a result, all recommendations to support local Community Organisations through financial support are made subject to the provision of adequate funding being set aside in the Council's budget for 2021/22. The Council will ensure that all successful applicants are advised of the circumstances of the 2021/22 grants budget, and that the award of funding is subject to the inclusion of a grants

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

allocation in the final budget, to be agreed in February 2020. In the event the budget is reduced, it is proposed that a Special Meeting of the Executive is held at the end of February 2021 to consider the allocation of the available budget; should no budget be allocated, all successful applicants would be advised accordingly.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) any unused funds remaining in the budget from the 2021/22 financial year be transferred to the Community Fund;
- (iii) the allocation of funding of £10,000 to the Woking Asian Business Forum to manage the Alpha Road Community Hall (ARCH) be noted;
- (iv) the risks posed to the 2021/22 grant budgets and thereby the awards of funding recommended to the Executive, as set out in the report, be noted and communicated to all Groups for which funding is agreed by the Executive; and
- (v) a Special Meeting of the Executive be scheduled for 7.00pm on Thursday, 25 February 2021 to review the allocation of funds in the event either the Revenue Grant budget or the Capital Grant budget is reduced as part of budgetary considerations.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To determine financial support for voluntary and community organisations through the Council's Community Grants Scheme for the 2021/22 financial year.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
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Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Community Grants scheme is an annual funding process through which the Council seeks to assist and support local voluntary and community projects serving the residents of the Borough. The scheme is advertised in June and applications, together with their supporting documents must be submitted by early September through a form available through the Council's website.
- 1.2 58 applications have been received seeking financial assistance in the 2021/22 financial year. A schedule summarising the applications received, the amounts requested and the amounts recommended, is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.
- 1.3 A copy of the Council's guidelines in respect of applications for financial assistance is attached at Appendix 1. In 2009 the Council adopted a definition of a Community Organisation to assist those considering submitting an application to the Council – a copy of the definition is set out in Appendix 2. All information relating to the Community Grants Scheme is available on Woking Borough Council's website.
- 1.4 The Council has also adopted a Policy Statement for the support it provides to the voluntary sector. The Policy states that the Council will target its support at those organisations that contribute towards the achievement of its general priorities and objectives and, more specifically, those set out in the Community Strategy. These are:
 - A strong **Community Spirit** with a clear sense of belonging and responsibility.
 - A clean, healthy and safe **Environment**.
 - A **Transport** system that is linked and accessible, recognising Woking's potential as a transport hub.
 - Access to decent **Housing** which is affordable for local people and key workers.
 - A community which values personal **Health and Well-Being**.
 - Provide opportunities and encourage people to participate in **Learning** throughout their lives so they progress and reach their potential.
- 1.5 It should be noted that a number of the applications satisfy more than one of the themes.
- 1.6 A copy of the Policy Statement is attached for information at Appendix 4.

Executive Reports

- 1.7 A report on each application has been prepared and these are set out elsewhere on the agenda. Each report outlines the aims and objectives of the applicant, the purpose of the application, how much is requested, the costs of the project, the applicant's financial position, previous support by the Council and a recommendation as to the amount to be awarded.
- 1.8 The recommendations in the reports have been drawn up taking into account the comments of consultees, including the Council's representatives on outside bodies. Informal discussions have been held with the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder and the Shadow Portfolio Holder, and their comments have been taken into consideration.
- 1.9 For purposes of financial planning, should the Executive propose a change to a recommendation in any of the reports, consideration may need to be given to the impact on the overall budget.

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

Monitoring

- 1.10 All successful applicants are required to accept the grant and, more importantly, the conditions of the grant before any funding will be released. Key to the grants scheme is regular monitoring information to be provided by the applicants. The applicants are advised of the information to be provided at the time of the award notification and are sent reminders to submit the information. In the event of a Group proving itself poor at providing the monitoring information, Officers withhold the release of their payments pending receipt of the information.

2.0 COVID-19 Pandemic

- 2.1 The impact of Covid-19 on the Borough's residents, community organisations, businesses and the Council cannot be underestimated, and should be taken into consideration as part of the Council's discretionary funding arrangements for the voluntary and community sector. Each applicant was invited to give an indication of the impact of the national lockdowns and social distancing restrictions on their services and communities supported, and it is clear that all have seen significant changes in the way they operate, seeking to support the people most in need through new approaches designed in light of the social distancing restrictions. Details of the impact of Covid-19 on local organisations have been included in the respective reports on the applications, though it should be noted that these statements were submitted as part of the application forms in August 2020 and do not take into consideration the impact of the latest restrictions and lockdown.

- 2.2 In considering the applications received, it should be borne in mind that the Council's community grants scheme is not there to make up any losses incurred by the Groups in the current year as a result of Covid-19. The Council does not have sufficient resources to do so. The recommendations before the Executive seek to support projects to be undertaken in the coming financial year (2021/22) and will not be used to build up the reserves of individual groups.

- 2.3 The full impact on the Council's finances cannot yet be calculated and will not be known for some time. There remains significant risks to the Council's discretionary budgets and the ability to maintain the level of financial support for the voluntary sector at the current levels. The implications from any reduction in the funding available are significant and for those Groups largely or fully reliant on the funding it could result in a reduction or complete loss of their services in the Borough.

- 2.4 Each year, successful applicants are advised the following at the time of the funding award:

"The financial pressure on the Council's budgets is expected to continue in the coming years and accordingly the overall level of support available in future years may be reduced. The applicant is therefore to be advised that the award of funding for the following year does not imply that a similar application in the subsequent year would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the coming year's levels.

In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for the subsequent year have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond the end of the coming financial year. All applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support."

- 2.5 In advising this, however, neither the Council nor the successful applicants could have envisaged an event that would have such extensive and long lasting harmful implications as have been seen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. A widespread reduction or loss of voluntary and community services in the Borough and beyond will have long lasting impacts

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

on the employees, volunteers and beneficiaries of the Groups concerned, many of the implications of which would be ongoing and seen over a period of years. The Council will, however, seek to maintain services, particularly for the most vulnerable.

- 2.6 At the present time and for the purposes of the applications before the Executive, it is assumed that the Council will be able to maintain the key revenue budget for the Community Grants Scheme in 2021/22 at the level seen in the current year. However, even should this be the case, the Council will need to seriously consider the budget levels in subsequent years and the implications that would arise for the local community and the Council's support services.
- 2.7 The decision has been made not to increase the capital budget for the coming year by £100,000; this fund, which current stands at £171,855, is awarded towards one-off costs such as the purchase of equipment or construction work.
- 2.8 The Council's budgets for the coming year, including the discretionary budget for grants to voluntary and community organisations, will not be agreed until February 2021. Whilst this is in accordance with the approach adopted in previous years, the impact of Covid-19 on the finances of the Council is such that there is a possibility that the level of support will have to be significantly reduced. In view of this, the Council will ensure that all successful applicants are advised of the circumstances of the 2021/22 grants budget, and that the award of funding is subject to the inclusion of a grants allocation in the final budget, to be agreed in February 2021.
- 2.9 In the event the budget is reduced, it is proposed that a Special Meeting of the Executive is held in February 2021 to consider the allocation of the available budget; should no budget be allocated, all successful applicants would be advised accordingly. The Executive is therefore recommended to agree that a Special Meeting of the Executive is provisionally scheduled for Thursday, 25 February 2021.

3.0 The Budgets

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council supports the voluntary and community sector through a number of discretionary budgets each year. The Community Grants Scheme makes use of the core revenue budget and the Council's Community Fund.
- 3.2 The budgets are set in February each year as part of the Council's budget setting process. As a consequence of the Executive's decision to move the Community Grants Scheme forward by three months, the budgets are currently in draft. The draft budget has been calculated in line with the 2020/21 budgets. However, the full impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the Council's finances is not yet known and may have significant implications for discretionary expenditure by the Council, including the grants budgets (see Section 2.0 and Section 10 of this report).
- 3.3 As in previous years, it is proposed that any remaining balance in the Community Grants Budget, following the decisions of the Executive, will be transferred to the Council's earmarked reserves.

Revenue Awards

- 3.4 The Grants Revenue Budget for 2021/22 has been provisionally set at £922,000, the same level as set for 2020/21.

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

- 3.5 The recommendations before the Executive represent a total of £919,052 in revenue funding, including an element of committed funding for the management of the Alpha Road Community Hall (£10,000). The remaining balance stands at £2,948.

One-off and Capital Awards

- 3.6 In addition to the revenue budget, there is a balance of £171,855 available during 2021/22 in the Council's Community Fund. The Council's Community Fund is used to fund one-off or capital projects such as building works or the purchase of equipment or vehicles. In view of the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances, the decision has been taken not to increase the budget by £100,000 as has been the case in previous years.
- 3.7 The recommendations before the Executive represent funding of up to £158,014 from the Community Fund. On the basis of the recommendations before the Executive, the anticipated balance within the Community Fund at 31 March 2022 will be £13,841.

Community Small Grants

- 3.8 The sum of £14,420 has been identified for the Community Small Grants Scheme, through which local individuals or groups can apply for small sums of money for projects under the headings of Sports, Arts, Youth, and Living Well in Woking. The funding is awarded throughout the financial year.

Arts, Sports and Youth Small Grants (£14,420)

- 3.9 The small grants scheme available to those residing or located within the Borough. Funding is awarded to individuals or clubs that would like to:
- (i) enhance or improve equipment and/or facilities for individual or group performances;
 - (ii) develop and expand the range of activities;
 - (iii) increase participation and the number of members;
 - (iv) provide specified specialist coaching or training for individuals or groups to achieve i, ii or iii above; and
 - (v) fund innovations or new events requiring initial support.
- 3.10 The Sports Grants of this scheme are administered by Woking Sports Council whilst applications for a youth grant are reviewed on a quarterly basis by Woking Youth Council.
- 3.11 There is a maximum award of £500 for exceptional projects with an average award of £275. Applications must include evidence that the applicant is contributing a minimum level of 50% to the cost of the scheme from either personal or other sources. There is a limit of one application per individual or group in any Council year. A minimum 40% proportion of grant funds is available for individual applications.

4.0 Community Grants Scheme Underspend during 2019/20 Financial Year

- 4.1 During 2019, the Community Grants Scheme received the benefit of a Review undertaken by Internal Audit to consider the overall annual process and recommend any improvements which could benefit the Council going forward. The Council received satisfactory assurance with a total of four medium or low priority recommendations highlighted, which were implemented shortly afterwards. In line with all Internal Audit reports, the final report was made available to the Standards and Audit Committee.
- 4.2 One of the recommendations was to report any underspend against the agreed revenue and capital budgets during the most recent financial year, as part of the annual covering report. Underspend would generally occur if a Group chose not to claim all of the grant awarded, for

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

example if its activity during the year was less than what had been originally intended at the time of application.

- 4.3 For the financial year ended April 2020, the Executive agreed a total revenue grant spend of £877,532 and at the end of the year there was an underspend of £3,996. The Executive also approved capital and one-off grants totalling £132,810, leading to an underspend of £12,758. The total revenue and capital support to voluntary organisations through the Community Grants Scheme during the 2019/20 financial year therefore equated to £993,588.

5.0 The Applications

- 5.1 Individual reports have been prepared for all the applications received in consultation with relevant Officers within the Council, including the Senior Equalities Officer. Informal discussions have been held with the Leader of the Council and both the Portfolio Holder and the Shadow Portfolio Holder for Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations on each of the recommendations.

Considerations in Determining the Applications

- 5.2 In considering the applications before them, the Members of the Executive are advised to take the following into account when reaching a decision:
- Does the application contribute towards the themes of Woking's Community Strategy?
 - Does the application deliver any specific action(s) in strategies/plans that the Council has signed up to?
 - Is there evidence that the application meets the needs of the local community?
 - Has the applicant met all the criteria for applying and supplied all the necessary information?
 - Has the application demonstrated evidence of financial need?
 - Are there any risks associated with the application?
 - Are there any other Organisations providing the same service within the Borough?
 - Has the applicant provided details of monitoring undertaken?
 - Is there evidence that the applicant has actively explored other sources of funding/fundraising?
 - Has the applicant provided sufficient evidence of demand to support the proposal?
 - Will there be the need for ongoing support in future years?
 - Do the proposals appear to offer good value for money?
 - Are the proposed conditions attached to recommendations adequate?
- 5.3 Officers have set out in each report a series of key elements relating to both the applicant and the application. These include whether the applicant is a registered charity, whether they have specific policies covering areas such as safeguarding, whether they have pursued other sources of funding and whether historically the Group has provided regular monitoring information. This summary has been drawn up to assist Members in their consideration of the applications.

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

6.0 Committed Funding for 2021/22

6.1 Included within the funding schedule for 2021/22 are three items of annual expenditure which have been agreed previously. These are summarised below.

Elderly People's Lunch Clubs

6.2 Each year, Elderly People's Lunch Clubs are invited to apply for financial assistance to help with their running costs. The level of grant is based on the number of members of the Club over the age of sixty, with awards of £2.00 for the first 50 members, £1.00 for the second 50 and £0.50 above 100. Applicants are required to give details of the services provided, accounts and a safeguarding policy.

6.3 The awards are dealt with under authority delegated to the Chief Executive. Three (six in 2020/21) applications have been received for assistance in 2021/22 and a total of £351 (£546 in 2020/21) has been set aside under delegated authority. The Groups to benefit are:

- Anandmilan – Vadil Parivar Elderly Club
- Mascot Friendship Cafe
- Pyrford Retired Men's Lunch Club

6.4 A copy of the full report is available on request through Democratic Services.

6.5 From discussions with the Clubs, it is clear that the lunch clubs have been affected by Covid-19, and it is understood that two of the Clubs supported last year are not in a position to seek funding for the coming year as a result.

High Sheriff's Award

6.6 The High Sheriff's Award is a scheme which encourages schools, youth clubs, and all other youth related organisations to set up projects that tackle crime prevention and community safety issues. The scheme is an Award of Excellence that any group of young people can work towards achieving, with practical help and on-going support available. Contributions towards the scheme are provided by the County's Borough and District Authorities. Young people – normally between the ages of 9 and 18 – can apply for grants from £50 up to £1,000 to fund their projects. Full details can be found on the High Sheriff's website (www.surreyhighsheriff.org/awards).

6.7 The Council has supported the scheme since 2002. The level of contribution increased in 2020 by £500 and the contribution for the coming year stands at £2,500 (£2,500 in 2020/21).

Alpha Road Community Hall (ARCH)

6.8 The Council has funded the management of the Alpha Road Community Hall (located along Alpha Road, Maybury) for many years, initially through the Maybury Centre before appointing the Woking Asian Business Forum as the manager of the Hall from April 2018. For the purposes of meeting the management costs of the Hall, the sum of £10,000 is ringfenced annually in the community grants budget. The venue provides a main hall, meeting room and kitchen for hire.

7.0 Other Forms of Support

7.1 The Council's support for the Voluntary Sector goes far beyond direct funding and includes elements such as rent free accommodation, discretionary rate relief, storage facilities for vehicles and direct Officer support. Although not always apparent, these types of support by

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

the Council are extensive and invaluable for a wide range of local groups. With the inclusion of the value of the car park spaces provided, the estimated value of the other forms of support provided by the Council is £870,820 for the year.

Car Parking

- 7.2 There are 28 parking bays set aside for the Woking Voluntary Services in the Town Centre Shoppers Yellow Car Park on the lower mezzanine level. Each bay has a face value of £1,800 (albeit the reserved nature of the bays gives them a greater value than a normal season ticket). A total of 134 annual permits are now issued for use in these bays.
- 7.3 Permits have been provided since October 2016 to the charity Outline for their volunteers to park weekdays 6pm to midnight and weekends at all times. The intention is that they will be able to park in the unreserved parking bays on the mezzanine level which has capacity at the times requested. The estimated value of each bay per annum is £600.
- 7.4 The value of the support is therefore approximately £56,400.

Community Lettings

- 7.5 A number of Groups receive reduced levels of rent for Council owned premises under its Community Lettings Policy. These include Citizens Advice Bureau, Relate West Surrey, the Maybury Centre, shopMobility and Woking Community Transport. The level of the rent is calculated on the Group's ability to cover the costs and is reviewed every five years. The estimated value for the support is £250,000.

Discretionary Rate Relief

- 7.6 Groups can apply for discretionary rate relief for the premises they occupy. Charitable Groups are eligible for 80% statutory rate relief and can apply to the Council for relief on the remaining 20%, which the Council has the discretion to determine. The provision of Discretionary Rate Relief is a very cost effective way of providing support to these organisations due to a proportion of the cost being funded by central Government through the pooling arrangement for business rates. The estimated value for the year is £550,000.

Officer and Member Support

- 7.7 A number of Groups receive direct Officer support and advice. In addition to this, the Council appoints Member representatives to a number of the Organisations, including Woking shopMobility, the Maybury Centre and Woking Community Transport.

Service Charges

- 7.8 A number of Groups occupying Council-owned properties are liable for service charges for their accommodation. Service charges cover accommodation costs incurred by the Groups such as heating, lighting and services such as water. Where the Council covers the full cost of the service charges, the costs are paid by internal transfer.

Volunteering

- 7.9 Volunteer Woking aims to deliver a healthy local voluntary sector for people living in Woking, to actively increase and improve the quantity, quality, and diversity of volunteering locally.
- 7.10 The Council supports the sector through:
- Brokerage: Matching both individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community. Volunteer Woking holds information on

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

a comprehensive range of opportunities and offer potential volunteers support and advice matching the volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities.

- Community Development: Strengthening the voluntary sector's capacity to help its clients through promoting best practice, funding advice and training;
- Voices: Speaking up for the voluntary sector on issues crucial to its future, and increasing the sector's access to, and influence upon, decision makers;
- Support: Officers provide help and advice on Governance, provide a Payroll service and DBS checking facility for all charities and non – profit organisation in the Woking Borough.

7.11 As Woking Charities continue to be stretched by the pandemic, Volunteer Woking has helped by keeping charities updated with guidance coming out from government, funding, the offer of PPE equipment and ensuring that volunteers can be sourced to help out if a charity requests assistance. A weekly newsletter is sent out updating charities on funding and information on their sector. The major impact for charities seems to be technology, the cost in setting it up, having the correct equipment in place and teaching their clients and colleagues how to use it. They also had to think of ways to contact people who are digitally excluded. Charities have been able to achieve this, but at an extra cost to their organisation which would not have been factored into their annual budget. Funding is still a major issue and will continue to be so with most charities unable to do their usual fundraising events. This has seen a rise in job losses in the sector.

7.12 Volunteer Woking had a great response asking for Volunteers to sign up to help their local community, with over 700 volunteers registering. So far they have been utilised for shopping, transport and collecting prescriptions. E-mails are sent every other week to all active volunteers giving them updates and information on new opportunities to volunteer. This ensures Volunteer Woking maintains contact to ensure that a pool of volunteers is available to help when needed.

8.0 Broad Policies

8.1 Broad policies have been developed over recent years for the determination of applications, as follows:

Revenue Funding

8.2 Whenever a grant is made towards revenue funding the applicants are informed of the basis on which future funding will be awarded.

8.3 The recommendations for ongoing revenue funding in 2021/22 have largely been made on the basis of the level of funding awarded for 2020/21. No allowance for inflation has been included and the level of recommended revenue funding has only been increased where special circumstances warrant an increase.

Rent

8.4 The Council charges rent to voluntary and community groups using Council owned premises. Where an application is for the rent of Council owned premises it is indicated in individual reports. Payment of any grant for this purpose will be by internal transfer to the appropriate budget.

8.5 The Council also operates a Community Lettings Scheme through which Community Groups occupying Council owned premises can apply for a reduced or peppercorn rent. Community Lettings are awarded under delegated authority and are reviewed every five years.

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

- 8.6 Examples of Groups in receipt of Community Lettings include Woking shopMobility, Surrey Welfare Rights, and Citizens Advice Woking.

One-off and Capital Grants

- 8.7 Applications for one-off or capital grants have been considered on their merits and the recommendations have been made accordingly. The Grants criteria state that grants for capital projects such as building works or the purchase of equipment will be awarded up to 50% of the total cost unless special circumstances apply.
- 8.8 The funding is awarded from the Council's Community Fund. In the case of significant building projects, an element of the grant, normally 10%, may be withheld subject to an inspection by Officers.

9.0 Conditional Support and Informatives

- 9.1 Each report which carries a recommendation to support a project, whether for revenue or capital funding, will set out a series of conditions and informatives on which the support is dependent. The majority of these conditions are common to most if not all Council funded voluntary sector groups. A brief summary of the standard conditions is set out below. In some cases, additional conditions may be added for specific elements, such as the adoption of appropriate policies or the sharing of resources.

Confirmation of Funding

- 9.2 To reflect this year's budgetary position, the following additional informative has been added to all reports with a recommendation to fund:

"This award is provisionally made on the expectation that the Council's budgets for revenue and capital projects remain at the same level allocated for the current financial year. The Council's overall budget, including the sums allocated for community grants, will be determined by Council at its meeting on 11 February 2021. In the event the grant budgets are set at the anticipated levels, confirmation of the Council's support will be sent to successful applicants. Groups should not plan for the 2021/22 funding until this confirmation has been received.

Should the budgets be reduced as part of the Council's efforts to achieve savings to offset the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's financial position, a special meeting of the Executive will be held to review the provisional awards and allocate the funds available on a priority basis."

Accounts.

- 9.3 The Organisation must submit accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet.

Monitoring Information.

- 9.4 Organisations must submit monitoring information as a measure of their achievements. Failure to provide details will jeopardise the award.

Publicity.

- 9.5 Where possible, the Organisations are required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on websites and literature / leaflets produced.

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

Payments.

- 9.6 Unless exceptional circumstances exist, all invoices must be received quarterly with monitoring information for the previous quarter.

Payment Period.

- 9.7 Final quarter claims must be made by the second week in April. Unclaimed awards will not be available at a later date unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated before the end of the award year.

Invoices / Receipts.

- 9.8 In order to claim an element of the funding, Organisations must submit paid invoices or receipts relating to equipment purchased or services provided.

Inspection.

- 9.9 Ten percent of the funding for large capital projects will be retained until a satisfactory inspection has been carried out by Council officers.

Future Budgets

- 9.10 The financial pressure on the Council's budgets is expected to continue in the coming years and accordingly it is proposed that successful applicants are advised that the level of any future support may be reduced. Organisations awarded revenue funding for the coming year are to be advised that the support does not imply that a similar application in 2022/23 would be supported. Furthermore, the Council is unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2021/22 levels.

Joint Working

- 9.11 Over the recent years, Groups have been encouraged to engage positively in joint working around health and well-being, both with agencies such as Woking Borough Council and with other voluntary organisations. To further this, a standard condition, as set out below, is added to the recommendations within the reports:

“Joint Working. Woking Borough Council expects the Organisation to engage positively on health and wellbeing multi-agency joint work affecting Woking. Groups which refuse may place their Council support at risk, e.g. grant, concessionary rent and other assistance.”

- 9.12 It is recommended that the Council once again encourages joint working and that the condition is added to recommendations within the reports.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

- 9.13 Following the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the Council expects the support of partner agencies in identifying people at risk of homelessness as early as possible to maximise the opportunities to prevent such. All Groups supported through the Council's Community Grants Scheme are asked to assist the Council in assisting those at risk of homelessness.
- 9.14 Partner agencies / organisations are expected to be engaged in joint working arrangements to assist in finding suitable housing and support solutions and, where appropriate, to undertake and respond to the new 'duty to refer'. Groups supported by the Council which do not support this new legislation and way of working positively may put their Council support at risk.

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

Venue Hire

- 9.15 The following paragraph has been added as a condition of any funds awarded to Groups in respect of the hire of any rooms managed by the Applicant.

“Woking Borough Council has a duty to ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. This duty extends to organisations that work with the local authority so this includes recipients of any grants from Woking Borough Council. If you hire out your venue/s you should ensure you have good processes in place for record keeping and checking if they are an appropriate group to be making the hire arrangements. The following are some of what should be considered:

- Basic details should be recorded to include speakers address, mobile phone number & organisation details.
- Has the identity of the speaker been confirmed & is their organisation bona fide? Are they known to you?
- Is the speaker from the area? Are they UK citizens or from overseas & will they travel specifically for this event?
- Consider checks on the internet to confirm the status of speaker to include website, YouTube or social media sites.
- How many people are likely to attend (check previous or similar events either locally or online).”

10.0 Implications

Covid-19

- 10.1 The implications of Covid-19 on the Council’s Community Grants Scheme are not yet fully known. It is clear that many of the local community groups have struggled during the lockdowns and as a result of the social distancing restrictions, but many have looked to deliver their support to the local community through different and often innovative approaches. The Groups will continue to support residents in the best ways possible as long as Covid-19 continues to dominate everyone’s lives, though will have seen losses of income, drops in participation and changes to their employee and volunteer numbers.
- 10.2 The Council itself faces significant losses in income and increases in expenditure as a result of Covid-19 and will need to review all elements of expenditure, in particular discretionary spending such as the Council’s Community Grants scheme. At this stage, it is intended to maintain the key revenue budget for the coming year at the current year’s level but not to increase the capital fund. However, the budgets for the year will not be set until February 2021 and the Council will need to ensure that all successful applicants are advised of the circumstances of the 2021/22 grants budget, and that the award of funding is subject to the inclusion of a grants allocation in the final budget, to be agreed by Council in February 2021.
- 10.3 In the event the budget is reduced, it is proposed that a Special Meeting of the Executive is held on Thursday, 25 February 2021 to consider the allocation of the available budget; should no budget be allocated, all successful applicants would be advised accordingly.

Financial

- 10.4 As a result of the Officer recommendations and committed funding, a total of £2,948 from the revenue budget and a total of £13,841 from the Community Fund remain unallocated. The

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

position is such that consideration of the budget may need to be taken into account in the event of any recommendations being revised by the Executive.

- 10.5 A summary of the financial implications of the Officer recommendations before the Executive, together with the level of committed funding in the coming year, is set out below. The total funding proposed for local community projects and organisations in the coming year is £1,091,486 (£1,061,304 in 2020/21). This sum comprises the recommendations in respect of the Revenue Budget (£919,052), the Community Fund (£158,014), together with the budget for Council's Small Grants Programme (£14,420).

	Revenue Budget	Community Fund	Small Grants	Total
Available Resources	£922,000	£171,855	£14,420	£1,108,275
Recommendations	£919,052	£158,014	-	£1,077,066
Other Awards	-	-	£14,420	£14,420
Balance Available	£2,948	£13,841	-	-

- 10.6 On top of this sum, the Council provides further support through peppercorn rents, discretionary rate relief, car parking and direct assistance by Councillors and Officers valued at approximately £870,820, giving a total value of support of £1,962,306. A more detailed breakdown of the recommendations, and the budgets available, is set out in Appendix 3.

Human Resource/Training and Development

- 10.7 There are no training and development implications directly arising from this report.

Community Safety

- 10.8 There are no community safety implications directly arising from this report. However, a number of the organisations supported by the Council provide services which contribute to greater community safety, either directly or indirectly.

Risk Management

- 10.9 The Council's support of local community groups provides an added element to the services and facilities available in the Borough. In many cases, the services provided by such Groups would otherwise need to be provided directly by the Borough Council or other statutory authorities.
- 10.10 In Risk Management terms, reducing or withdrawing the Council's financial or in-kind support would have a direct impact on the services provided by the many Groups which benefit from the Council's support. In many cases, this would lead to a reduction in the level of the services, although in some cases, notably those reliant on the Council's support to a significant extent, it could result in the failure of the Groups.
- 10.11 The potential risk to the budget for the coming year as a result of the financial impact of Covid-19 on the Council is covered earlier in this report. There is a possibility that the

Applications for Financial Assistance – Annual Report

Council will have to significantly reduce the discretionary grant budgets as part of its efforts to address the current and coming years' anticipated deficits as a result of the impact of Covid-19. The budget for 2021/22 will be set by Council at its meeting on 11 February 2021 and will determine the funds available to distribute as grants to community groups. It should be noted that the awards for 2020/21 will not be affected.

Sustainability

10.12 There are no environmental or sustainability implications directly arising from this report. However, each application is considered on its merits and to varying degrees have environmental or sustainability implications. The Groups are encouraged to consider the sixteen themes of sustainability adopted by the Council and are invited through the application process to outline how their organisation helps to meet the themes.

Equalities

10.13 The Grants Scheme has been assessed against the Council's Equalities standards by the Council's Senior Equalities Officer in order to ensure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality.

10.14 Each application is considered on its own merits and all applicants are required to submit their Equal Opportunities Policy as part of the grant application process. In the context of social inclusion, many of the groups supported by the Council make positive contributions to disadvantaged people.

10.15 Copies of the assessments prepared by the Council's Equalities Officer are attached at Appendix 5 to this report.

11.0 Consultations

11.1 The merits of each application have been considered and recommendations have been made on the basis of the policies previously applied. Council Officers have been consulted on specific applications together with the Councillors appointed representatives on the Groups. Each application has also been discussed with the both the Portfolio Holder and the Shadow Portfolio Holder for Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations and the Leader of the Council. In addition, the Council's Senior Equalities Officer has been consulted on the applications submitted. These discussions have shaped the recommendations.

REPORT ENDS