

WOKING ASIAN BUSINESS FORUM – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

Woking Asian Business Forum was formed in 2008 funded from the Council's Prevent programme, and acts as a platform to deal with issues such as isolation and health and wellbeing, whilst also working with young people, the Hackney trade and fast food premises. The Forum also works with landlords and developers with support provided on planning and compliance. The Group is involved with many forums with the Asian Community and feels that its work has galvanised the communities and assists them with feeling an integral part of the town. The Organisation was in receipt of funding of £14,000 from the Council's service budgets in 2021/22 and has been asked to apply for a grant if it wished to apply to extend the funding into 2022/23.

The Forum has applied for a grant of £14,000 towards the running of the Forum, with any surplus to be used to support projects within the Borough. The funding includes the Outreach Worker's salary of £10,000.

The application highlights the community work it has undertaken, which includes the All About Health Awareness scheme to raise awareness of health issues for those living in Sheerwater, including on the spot health check stalls with a GP present; fundraising for Woking Hospice, Nepal Earthquake Appeal, Nourish the Nurses and Your Sanctuary; a free smoothie bike at the Food Festival Events; provision of help to over 500 individuals with renewing their Pakistani National ID; extensive engagement with the taxi trade; and the donation of the Christmas Tree in Jubilee Square for the past 12 years.

Woking Asian Business Forum provides support to a range of Asian businesses in Woking as confirmed by Woking's Business Liaison Team. The application provides an overview of some of the activity, including the management of The Arch Centre in Maybury which is rented at affordable rates to various community groups.

In light of the Council's financial situation, it is recommended that a grant of £5,000 should be awarded for 2022/23. The Forum provides an important support to the Woking community. The grant is to support this work; however, in future years the Group are encouraged to seek wider funding arrangements as noted in recent board meeting minutes submitted with the application and to fully utilise the use of The Arch to maintain a regular and sustainable income to reinvest back into the community. Advice and guidance can be provided by Council Officers who run Centres for the Community. The Group are also encouraged to be clear on any future applications regarding paid staff and the specific role they play in outreach services and the identifiable outcomes associated with these.

Alpha Road Community Hall

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.

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Recommendations	
The Executive is requested to:	<p>RESOLVE That, subject to the outcome of the Council’s budgetary process,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a grant of £5,000 be awarded from service budgets towards the running costs of the Forum; and (ii) the allocation of funding of £10,000 to the Woking Asian Business Forum to manage the Alpha Road Community Hall be noted.
Reason for Decision	To enable the valued community work undertaken by the Forum to continue.
Confirmation of funding	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 10 February 2022. 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 2022/23 funding until this confirmation has been received.
Conditions	<p>Accounts. The Organisation must submit accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet. Please note that accounts for other years may also be required.</p> <p>Monitoring Information. The Organisation must submit quarterly monitoring information as a measure of its achievements. Failure to provide details will jeopardise the award. E-mail requests will be sent to the applicant on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on websites and literature / leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. 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 to the Council before the end of the award year.</p> <p>Joint Working. WBC 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.</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. 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. 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 which do not support this new legislation and</p>

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	<p>way of working positively may put their Council support at risk.</p> <p>Venue Hire. 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 Groups hire out their venue(s) they should ensure good processes are in place for record keeping and checking if hirers are appropriate groups to be making the hire arrangements. The following are some areas which should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic details should be recorded to include speaker’s address, mobile phone number and organisation details. • Has the identity of the speaker been confirmed and is their organisation bona fide? Are they known to the hirer? • Is the speaker from the area? Are they UK citizens or from overseas and will they travel specifically for this event? • Consider checks on the internet to confirm the status of speakers to include website, YouTube or social media sites. • How many people are likely to attend (check previous or similar events either locally or online).
Performance Indicators	<p>Users. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users.</p> <p>Activities. The Organisation to provide details of activities and events held.</p> <p>Publicity. The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised.</p> <p>Statement of Use. The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p>
Future Support	<p>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 2022/23 does not imply that a similar application in 2023/24 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2022/23 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group’s operations for 2023/24 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2023. 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.</p>

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2022/23 Application Form.

Reporting Person:

Julie Fisher, Chief Executive

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Extn: 3301, Email: julie.fisher@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person:

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

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

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Simon Ashall
Email: cllrsimon.ashall@woking.gov.uk

Shadow Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Will Forster
Email: cllrwill.forster@woking.gov.uk

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>Woking Asian Business Forum was formed in 2008 funded from the Prevent programme, and acts as a platform to deal with issues such as isolation and health and wellbeing, whilst also working with young people, the Hackney trade and fast food premises. The Forum also works with landlords and developers with support provided on planning and compliance. The Group is involved with many forums with the Asian Community and feels that its work has galvanised the communities and assists them with feeling an integral part of the town.</p> <p>As the Forum has been established for over twelve years, the community see it as a group that can provide support to them, and also a link with the Borough Council.</p>
1.2 Employees	None. The Outreach Worker works as a self-employed contractor.
1.3 Volunteers	60.
1.4 Clients/Users	<p>350, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 250 male 100 female 30 disabled 300 ethnic minority 350 resident in Woking <p>The community and charity rates to hire the Alpha Road Community Hall is £12 per hour, £10 for 2 hours for the elderly ladies who meet every Wednesdays. The private hire is competitive at £20 per hour. The prayer groups are given priority bookings and rates. As set out in the covering report included in this agenda pack, the Council separately pays the Forum the sum of £10,000 to manage the Hall on its behalf.</p> <p>The Forum works closely with all faiths, Surrey Police, Woking Borough Council, local businesses and the communities it serves. An example is highlighted as projects for the taxi community, where extensive market research takes place. On one occasion, this included letters sent to around 800 individuals.</p>
1.5 Members	<p>300, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 male 100 female 50 disabled 250 ethnic minority 250 resident in Woking 300 aged 19-65 70 aged 65+ <p>No charge is made for membership of the Forum.</p>

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1.6 Sum Requested	£14,000 (Revenue)
1.7 Project	The grant applied for is towards the running of the Forum, with any surplus to be used to support projects within the Borough.
1.8 Cost breakdown:	The Outreach Worker’s salary equates to £10,000, with an extra £4,000 being allocated to costs such as IT and admin, telephone expenses, accountancy fees and website serviced offices.
1.9 Community Benefit	<p>The Forum notes that it is difficult to measure the numbers, however prior the pandemic it has supported over 150 young people through the Prince’s Trust by mentoring girls and boys at Bishop David Brown after school who were preparing for their GCSEs. The mentoring assisted the children with achieving higher grades than expected, with some later going onto study at University. Subsequently, a mothers and daughters joint mentoring programme was held in primary schools, which ran for one year due to the availability of funding.</p> <p>The Forum also developed “AAHA – All About Health Awareness”, following a piece of research which showed the health differences of those living on either side of the Basingstoke Canal equated to a reduced life expectancy of 10 years for people residing in Maybury and Sheerwater. The Forum notes that the community has significant health related issues, such as levels of diabetes, heart conditions, mental health, lack of exercise, and poor diets. The Forum has therefore operated on the spot health checks stalls with a GP present to check blood pressure, BMI, blood sugar, heart rates. It has also arranged for a free smoothie bike to be available at each Woking Food Festival to promote healthy living in the ethnic community.</p> <p>The Forum has donated the main Christmas Tree in Jubilee Square for the past 12 years. It has raised large sums of money for Charities such as Woking Hospice (£120,000) and Appeals such as the Nepal Earthquake appeal (£30,000). It also donated £1,000 to Your Sanctuary where £50 went to a family to buy ingredients and cakes to host a party, at which each family had to raise £500 for Your Sanctuary.</p> <p>Funds were raised for the “Nourish the Nurses” campaign, where over 300 fresh fruit and vegetables were provided as support through Local Resilience Task Groups during the pandemic.</p> <p>The Forum organised over 500 individuals who needed to renew their Pakistani National ID cards, where individuals had to travel to the Pakistan Embassy. It arranged for representatives from the Pakistan Embassy to attend Woking Mosque to process over 500 cards over two weekends.</p> <p>The Forum adds that it works with the following organisations: Woking Borough Council, Your Sanctuary, Surrey Police, Start-up Woking, Woking Works, Surrey Chambers of Commerce, Woking Chamber, WATCH, Woking Fire Station, Help the Heroes, Nourish the Nurses, Shifa, Street Angels, Woking & Sam Beare Hospice, NHS, Mosaic Business in Community, Brookwood Cemetery, Bedser Foundation and the Military Remembrance Services.</p>
1.10 Covid-19 Impact	The Forum notes the impact of the lockdown periods on its members and also the community through the temporary closure of the Alpha

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	Road Community Hall facility.
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2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £41,489 as reserves, including £7,000 of funding from the Lottery Fund for ‘The Living and the Dead’ project exploring minority burial grounds in Brookwood Cemetery.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2022/23 which shows an anticipated income of £19,000, which includes WBC Grant £14,000, Networking £1,000 and Newsletter Advertising Income £4,000.</p> <p>The anticipated expenditure is forecast at £16,380, including Outreach Worker £10,000, Newsletter Costs £2,000, and Provision of Town Centre Christmas Tree £1,500. The anticipated surplus is £2,620 which the Forum notes will be made available for community projects.</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted short accounts for 2020/21 which show a balance sheet only. The net current assets is set at £41,489, compared with £28,224 in 2019/20.</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>* During 2021/22 funding of £14,000 was received from service budgets towards running costs.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes *</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>
3.2 Assessment	<p>The Woking Asian Business Forum provides support to a range of Asian businesses in Woking as confirmed by Woking’s Business Liaison Team. The application provides an overview of some of the activity, including the management of The Arch Centre in Maybury</p>	

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REPORT ENDS