

APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE 2019/2020

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 June and the beginning of September 2018 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 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 the Portfolio Holder for Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations and the 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 £877,249 of the available revenue budget. The recommendations utilise up to £200,810 of the Community Fund, resulting in a forecast balance of £117,496 in the Borough Council's Community Fund as at 31 March 2020.

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 3.3 of the report and have been drawn up to assist in the determination of the funding requests.

The report also seeks to provide an indication of the wide range of support the Council provides to the voluntary sector, with an estimated value of £770,820. The total estimated value of the Council's support for the voluntary sector in the coming year is therefore £1,848,879.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the positions regarding the applications for Horsell Prepared and Freedom Leisure be noted;
- (iii) any unused funds remaining in the budget from the 2019/20 financial year be transferred to the Community Fund; and
- (iv) the allocation of funding of £10,000 to the Woking Asian Business Forum to manage the Alpha Road Community Hall (ARCH) be noted.

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Reasons for Decision

Reason: To determine financial support for voluntary and community organisations through the Council's Community Grants Scheme for the 2019/20 financial year.

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

Background Papers: None.

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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 the end of August/early September through a form available through the Council's website.
- 1.2 58 applications have been received seeking financial assistance in the 2019/20 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 and, through links, on the Window on Woking 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 and the 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.

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- 1.10 Full details of the applicants, the applications, payments and monitoring are available to Councillors through Shikari, including all supporting information provided by the applicants.

Monitoring

- 1.11 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 The Budgets

Introduction

- 2.1 The Council supports the voluntary and community sector through a number of budgets each year. The Community Grants Scheme makes use of the core revenue budget and the Council's Community Fund.
- 2.2 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 the expectation that, when the Council agrees the budget in February 2019, there will be no variations to the grants budget.
- 2.3 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

- 2.4 The Grants Revenue Budget for 2019/20 has been set at £900,000.
- 2.5 The recommendations before the Executive represent a total of £877,249 in revenue funding, including an element of committed funding (£2,517). The total funding recommended from the Council's Community Fund for revenue costs for the coming year is £200,810.

One-off and Capital Awards

- 2.6 In addition to the revenue budget, there is a balance of £318,306 available during 2019/20 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.
- 2.7 The recommendations before the Executive represent funding of up to £200,810 from the Community Fund. On the basis of the recommendations before the Executive, the anticipated balance within the Community Fund at 31 March 2020 will be £117,496.

Community Small Grants

- 2.8 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.

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

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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.

Future Budgets

- 2.12 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 2020/21 would be supported. Furthermore, the Council is unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2019/20 levels.

Joint Working

- 2.13 Over the past two 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, was added to the recommendations within the reports:
- 2.14 "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."
- 2.15 It is recommended that the Council once again encourages joint working and that the condition is added to recommendations within the reports.

Venue Hire

- 2.16 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

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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)."

3.0 The Applications

3.1 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 the Portfolio Holder for Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations on each of the recommendations.

Considerations in Determining the Applications

3.2 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?

3.3 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.

4.0 Committed Funding for 2019/20

4.1 Included within the funding schedule for 2019/20 are items of expenditure which have been agreed previously. These are summarised below.

Elderly People's Lunch Clubs

4.2 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.

4.3 The awards are dealt with under authority delegated to the Chief Executive. Five (seven in 2018/19) applications have been received for assistance in 2019/20 and a total of £517 (£680 in 2018/19) has been set aside under delegated authority. The Groups to benefit are:

- Anandmilan – Vadil Parivar Elderly Club
- Humanity International Charitable Trust
- Pyrford Retired Men's Lunch Club
- St Hugh's Luncheon Club
- St John's Good Companions Club

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

High Sheriff's Award

4.5 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).

4.6 The Council has supported the scheme since 2002. In 2008/09 the level of funding from local authorities was reviewed and it was agreed that the level of contribution would be increased to an annual sum of £2,000. A sum of £2,000 has therefore been set aside for 2018/19.

5.0 Applications Not Taken Forward

5.1 Individual reports have not been prepared on the following applications. The Executive is invited to note the positions taken in respect of Freedom Leisure and Horsell Prepared.

Freedom Leisure

5.2 An application for financial support has been received from Freedom Leisure. Freedom Leisure is a not-for-profit leisure trust which manages leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of partners across the UK, including Woking Borough Council. Freedom Leisure is responsible for managing the Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park.

5.3 The main activities provided in Woking range from walking sports to high level fitness training for all ages and abilities.

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- 5.4 Freedom Leisure has applied for capital funding of £386.39 and revenue funding of £400. With the funding, Freedom Leisure intends to purchase Boccia equipment and an Xplorer licence for the year and deliver 1 hour sessions across Woking in a range of care homes, day centres and within Woking Leisure Centre. The Xplorer licence will enable them to deliver a range of free orienteering family sessions, during school holidays at a number of sites near to residents' homes such as Goldsworth Park.
- 5.5 Boccia is a precision ball sport, similar to bocce, and related to bowls and pétanque. The sport is contested at local, national and international levels, by athletes with severe physical disabilities. Boccia can be played by individuals, pairs, or teams of three and all events are mixed gender.
- 5.6 The breakdown of costs is as follows:
- Boccia equipment – £86.39
 - Xplorer licence – £300
 - Coaching cost @ £10per hr x 1hr a week (40 weeks) = £400
- 5.7 In view of the nature of the funding requested by Freedom Leisure, it has been agreed to direct the scheme to Sports Development budget from which funding will be provided direct to the applicant.

Horsell Prepared

- 5.8 Horsell Prepared was launched in May 2018 under the umbrella of Horsell Residents Association. The voluntary group was established to provide a co-ordinated community response capability to help those who live or work in Horsell, by supporting Woking Borough Council, and by extension, the emergency services and utility companies, in dealing with any incident affecting multiple households and/or business. The local knowledge and resources of the Group, together with its presence in the community, make Horsell Prepared well placed to help quickly and effectively.
- 5.9 Horsell Prepared also has a year-round role in assisting the village and its residents in prevention activities and in preparing for incidents, thereby reducing the impact of an emergency.
- 5.10 Horsell Prepared has applied for funding of £1,164 for the coming year towards both capital (equipment) costs and revenue (public liability insurance) costs. The applicant has advised that it is an operational necessity for Horsell Prepared to hold public liability insurance, a significant incremental cost above that of the insurance already held by Horsell Residents Association.
- 5.11 The capital expenditure is for additional volunteer equipment, consumables and printed materials. A breakdown of the anticipated costs is given below:

Elements of the Application	Costs
Incremental cost of Public Liability Insurance (above that of Horsell Res Assoc.)	£430 pa
Replenishment of emergency consumables	£220
Printing of volunteer instruction book, resident advice & guidance, publicity & awareness	£210
2 x PA systems for community communication	£160
2 x Spotlights for volunteer use in emergency	£56

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Virtual telephone system credits	£60
Total	£1,136*

*This figure differs slightly from the sum requested – the breakdown provided in the application had a slight mis-calculation for the costs of the spotlights.

- 5.12 In view of the scale and nature of the funding requested by Horsell Prepared, it has been agreed to direct the scheme to service budgets from which funding will be provided direct to the applicant.

6.0 Other Forms of Support

- 6.1 Key to the success of many groups is the Council's provision of support other than direct funding. This type of support includes rent free accommodation, discretionary rate relief, storage facilities for vehicles and direct Officer support. Although not always apparent, these types of support by 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 £770,820 for the year.

Car Parking

- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 The value of the support is therefore approximately £56,400.

Community Lettings

- 6.5 A number of Groups receive reduced levels of rent for Council owned premises under its Community Lettings Policy. These include Citizens Advice Woking, 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 year is £250,000.

Discretionary Rate Relief

- 6.6 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 £450,000.

Officer and Member Support

- 6.7 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 and Citizen's Advice Woking.

Service Charges

- 6.8 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.

7.0 Broad Policies

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

Revenue Funding

- 7.2 Whenever a grant is made towards revenue funding the applicants are informed of the basis on which future funding will be awarded.
- 7.3 The recommendations for ongoing revenue funding in 2019/20 have largely been made on the basis of the level of funding awarded in 2018/19. 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

- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 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. Examples of Groups in receipt of Community Lettings include Woking shopMobility, Surrey Welfare Rights, and Citizens Advice Woking.

One-off and Capital Grants

- 7.6 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.
- 7.7 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 (ref Mayford Village Hall).

8.0 Implications

Financial

- 8.1 As a result of the Officer recommendations and committed funding, a total of £22,751 from the revenue budget and a total of £117,496 from the Community Fund remain unallocated. The 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.
- 8.2 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

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funding proposed for local community projects and organisations in the coming year is £1,092,479. This sum comprises the recommendations in respect of the Revenue Budget (£877,249), the Community Fund (£200,810), together with the budget for Council's Small Grants Programme (£14,420).

- 8.3 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 £770,820, giving a total value of support of £1,848,879. A more detailed breakdown of the recommendations, and the budgets available, is set out in Appendix 3.

	Revenue Budget	Community Fund	Small Grants	Total
Available Resources	£900,000	£318,306	£14,420	£1,232,726
Recommendations	£877,249	£200,810	-	£1,078,059
Other Awards	-	-	£14,420	£14,420
Balance Available	£22,751	£117,496	-	-

Human Resource/Training and Development

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

Community Safety

- 8.5 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

- 8.6 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.
- 8.7 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.
- 8.8 In view of the continuing financial pressures on the Council's budgets, successful applicants will be advised that the level of any future support may be reduced.
- 8.9 Organisations awarded revenue funding for the coming year are to be advised that the support does not imply that a similar application in 2020/21 would be supported. The Organisations will be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for

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2020/21 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2020.

- 8.10 As in previous years, all applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach the Council's Community Development Team for advice and support.

Sustainability

- 8.11 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

- 8.12 The Grants Scheme has been assessed against the Council's Equalities standards by the Council's Senior Policy Officer in order to ensure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality.
- 8.13 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.
- 8.14 Copies of the assessments prepared by the Council's Senior Policy Officer are attached at Appendix 5 to this report.

9.0 Consultations

- 9.1 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 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