

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community Panel		
DATE:	15 th October 2019		
TITLE:	Financial Assistance Scheme – ‘Themed’ Fund		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Update		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Culture, Heritage and Health		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Sarah Dennis		
OPEN/EXEMPT		WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes/No

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:

The Panel will recall that at its meeting on 16th July 2019 a decision on the use of the Financial Assistance ‘themed’ fund was deferred pending further investigation into potential uses of the Fund.

To remind Members of the purpose of the ‘themed’ fund and the wider context of the Financial Assistance Scheme more generally, there is an outline of the Scheme below.

The Borough Council operates a Financial Assistance Scheme to support local community groups. This is split into three different elements as follows:

Small Grants Scheme 2019/20:

Capital projects £50,000
Revenue projects £13,030
Special ‘themed’ annual fund £4,000

Total Budget - £67,030

The Financial Assistance Scheme is administered on the Council’s behalf by the Norfolk Community Foundation with grant awards decided by the Portfolio Holder for Health, Culture and the Community, in consultation with the Executive Director – Finance. Local community groups must apply for funds and demonstrate that they meet pre-set criteria. The grants allocated are published after each award process as a Member Delegated Decision.

Currently, those eligible to apply to the Small Grants Scheme are:

- Charities
- Constituted voluntary and community groups
- Social Enterprises
- Community Interest Companies

Other statutory organisations, for example schools, and Town and Parish Councils are unable to apply to the revenue or capital fund. Town and Parish Councils are able to raise funds through their precept. They have been able to apply to the themed fund in previous years, however.

The themed fund is not utilised every year, it is only used where there are themes deemed appropriate to which to distribute the funds.

This report requests Members to consider the use of this themed fund in 2019/20.

KEY ISSUES:

Previous Proposals

At the Panel meeting in July 2019, the Panel considered proposals such as:

- Commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings in 1944
- Provide a small fund for local communities to purchase de-fibrillators for their community.

A number of other projects were put forward by Members, such as:

- Tree planting
- A commemorative bench for Councillor Ian Gourlay
- Creation of meadowlands on common land
- Commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War Two with war memorials
- Flowers in public gardens
- Providing a local musical group with funding in order to encourage the teaching and learning of musical instruments.

Further Proposals

Two further suggestions are now put forward for consideration by the Panel:

- To reduce the use of single use plastics in local communities, so for example, where local groups use disposable plastic plates or cutlery they could use a small grant for a more environmentally friendly approach, such as longer lasting crockery
- The organisation of litter picks in rural communities

This option would fit well with the recommendations of the Panel relating to the work of the Single Use Plastics Informal Working Group. In particular the recommendations to:

- 'Provide guidance to Parish Councils on how they can reduce the use of single use plastics within their own areas and events associated with them to reduce single use plastic use across the borough and;
- The Council to support and promote:.... Appropriate initiatives and projects being undertaken by partners and other local relevant organisations.' (Environment and Community Panel – 5th March 2019).

The fund should be used to support west Norfolk initiatives and should not look to replace core services of the public sector.

Other Sources of Funding

In relation to the ideas put forward at the July meeting, Members should be aware that there are a number of funding streams (both Borough Council and external sources) available for tree planting and flower gardens. For example The Woodland Trust are giving away trees to schools and communities and Norfolk Community Foundation is administering a fund on the Borough Council's behalf, using funds made available from the Ministry of Housing,

Communities and Local Government to transform outdoor community spaces in the borough. The Foundation also administers grants on behalf of a number of other funders and will therefore be able to locate funds for a wide variety of projects of this nature. The Local Cultural Education Board, in conjunction with Creative Arts East, could provide funding opportunities for musical groups. A Norfolk music hub is also in existence and is still looking for schools to work with.

OPTIONS:

- 1. Allocate the £4,000 to promote environmentally friendly initiatives in local communities such as the reduction of the use of single use plastics or local community litter picks**
- 2. No theme allocated for 2019/20 and the funds returned as a cost saving**
- 3. Themed funds to be added to the Financial Assistance revenue projects budget to be allocated subject to the usual revenue fund criteria**
- 4. The Panel to propose an alternative theme for 2019/20**
- 5. Any use of the themed fund to include a maximum award of between £250 and £500. The Panel to decide on the maximum award.**

Criteria

The criteria for any theme should be as follows:

Any non-profit group is able to apply, including constituted voluntary and community groups, Parish and Town Councils, charities, churches, social enterprises/ community interest companies and schools.

The Fund is able to consider a wide range of projects, which may include:

- Community events and projects
- Educational activities
- New memorials
- Refurbishment of existing memorials

The fund will not support:

- Trips and visits of any kind

The Fund is able to support both capital and revenue costs, and a maximum award should be considered. To maximise use of the fund, this could be between £250 and £500.

Priority will be given to projects that are able to evidence match funding.

Applicants seeking support for capital projects, such as new memorials etc, should ensure that all necessary permissions have been secured prior to making an application, and have funding for any repairs and necessary safety checks etc. Proposals should be realistic, and show evidence of project costs.

Projects do not need to complete within 12 months, though a timescale for delivery/ completion should be stated in the application. All those who receive a grant will be requested to add the Borough Council logo with the words 'supported by' added to any publicity.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members to consider the options and recommend how the themed fund should be used in 2019/20.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To distribute the themed fund.