



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

West Oxfordshire District Council

Name and date of Committee	Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure: Friday 18 December 2020
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 2
Subject	Community Revenue Grants 2020/21
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Suzi Coul, Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure Email: suzi.coul@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Heather McCulloch, Community Wellbeing Manager Tel: 01993 861562 Email: heather.mcculloch@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To approve a Community Revenue Grant award for 2020/21 under the authority given to the Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure by Cabinet on 18 April 2018.
Annexes	None
Recommendation	That the proposed Community Revenue Grant (2020/21) award of £1,311.00 to Homestart Oxford be approved.
Corporate priorities	The award of Community Revenue Grants helps support voluntary and community activity and partnership actions that help to achieve progress in the policy priorities outlined in the Council Plan 2020-24.
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1. The Council's Community Revenue Grant application process was introduced following a review of revenue grants management and Cabinet's January 2018 consideration of proposals for the future management of this voluntary and community sector funding. The Council's new grant scheme guidance incorporates criteria that govern eligibility for funding and the further assessment of grant applications.
- I.2. As summarised in the grant application for guidance, the key assessment criteria are:
 - Evidence of need.
 - Relevance to meeting the Council's priority aims.
 - The extent of the community benefit and impact that the project/ activity will deliver.
 - How the applicant organisation will monitor and evaluate the activity supported.
 - The assessment of risks (financial and other) associated with the project/ activity.
 - The application demonstrating a financial need for grant support.
 - Whether the grant represents value for money.
- I.3. The current grant application for 2020/21 has been assessed against the qualifying and assessment criteria for funding support as summarised above. This application has been reviewed by a Grants Panel and the recommended funding is brought forward in this report for Cabinet Member approval.
- I.4. Homestart Oxford was established in 1988 and provides non-judgmental, compassionate, confidential and individual support to families who are going through tough times, and have at least one child under 5. Their area of coverage is Witney, Carterton and the central and southern parts of West Oxfordshire.
- I.5. They are seeking funding to support young families to thrive by delivering three weekly online groups aimed at improving the mental wellbeing of parents and children and supporting attachment, play and early year's development and learning.
- I.6. The proposed activities include an online weekly open access baby group, an open access under 5s group to include story-time and singing with our Family Group coordinator and a PEEP group online (by-invitation). PEEP is an evidence-based approach which encourages parents as their children's first educators through role-modelling, games, stories, books and singing.
- I.7. During the emergency face to face services such as Health visiting have been all but withdrawn and social activities such as Baby and Toddler groups have not been meeting. New mums have been isolated and faced a very challenging period. The first 1001 days of a child's life are crucial to their development.

- 1.8. The current application requests £1,500.00 (4.5%) towards total project costs of £33,265.00. The criteria state that the Council will look to limit its funding to no more than 33% of the planned project/activity costs but will extend to a maximum allowable 50% funding per project in support of strong proposals. Furthermore, the Council will consider higher awards where the activity offers significant benefits across an extensive part of the district or strong connection with achieving the Council's ambitions for the District.

2. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 2.1. The current report sets out the funding recommendation that results from the Grant Panel's review of the Community Revenue Grant application. The approval of the grant award would endorse the evaluation process and allow the grant award to proceed as advised.
- 2.2. An alternative option would be to not accept the report's recommendation and reject the application for funding.
- 2.3. The Cabinet member could choose to accept the report's recommendation in part but award the full amount. This would require an additional sum of £189.00 to be found from an alternative source.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The recommended grant award in this report can be financed from the Council's Community Revenue Grants budget.
- 3.2. In 2020/21, the total available budget for the Community Revenue Grants is £188,260. On 18 March 2020 Cabinet approved awards to the value of £186,949. The remaining available budget in this financial year is £1,311.00.
- 3.3. Given the available budget the recommendation is to award £1,311.00.

4.

5. RISKS

- 5.1. Any risks associated with the funded activity are considered as part of the funding application and evaluation process. The known scope of the proposed project means that risk is limited.
- 5.2. Providing a lower amount of funding will cause the level of activity to be reduced but not cancelled.

6. REASONS

- 6.1. The award of revenue grants and the support of voluntary and community activity provides an effective way for the Council to support the achievement of Council Plan priorities.

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Background Papers: None