

**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND LEISURE:**  
**WEDNESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2018**  
**COMMUNITY REVENUE GRANT**  
**REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING MANAGER**  
**(Contact: Dene Robson, Tel: (01993) 861481)**

(The decisions on this matter will be resolutions.)

**1. PURPOSE**

To approve a Community Revenue Grant award for 2018/19 under the authority given to the Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure by Cabinet on 18 April 2018.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the proposed Community Revenue Grant (2018/19) award of £955.86 to the Lower Windrush Valley Project be approved.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. The Council's Community Revenue Grant application process was introduced following a review of revenue grants management and Cabinet's recent (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.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. The current grant application has been assessed against the qualifying and assessment criteria for funding support as summarised above. The application has been assessed through a Grants Panel and the recommended funding is brought forward in this report for Cabinet Member approval.
- 3.4. The Lower Windrush Valley covers 28 square kilometres of West Oxfordshire, incorporating the floodplain of the River Windrush from Witney to where it joins the River Thames at Newbridge. The landscape character of the valley has been transformed by mineral extraction with large areas of the riverside pasture transformed into a mosaic of open water. The Lower Windrush Valley Project (LWVP) was

established to create and implement an environmental strategy for this area. The County and District Councils work in partnership through LWVP with environmental organisations, mineral operators, landowners and local communities to coordinate and deliver a wide range of initiatives that raise awareness, understanding and involvement in the diverse issues that influence the environment in the valley.

- 3.5. The LWVP is currently funded and supported by Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, and Smith and Sons (Bletchington) Ltd. The small annual grant from the District Council (£2,000) contributes to the core costs of the partnership activity.
- 3.6. The current additional grant request of £955.86 for 2018/19 financial year is to provide part of the resource for a small project (total cost: £6,055.86) that will improve a 300 metre section of the Windrush Path from Standlake to Newbridge. The path is part of the Standlake Mosaic Trail and is a key link between the village of Standlake, the Thames Path and pubs at Newbridge – it is used by local Standlake residents and by those visiting the area and staying at one of the nearby hotels or campsites. The project is designed to improve the condition of the section of path and to provide new interpretation boards at each end that will replace the current boards that are in a dilapidated state.
- 3.7. The funding sought from the District Council is part of an assembly of funding drawn from a range of sources that includes the Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment (TOE); Standlake Parish Council; and Newland Angling Club. The project is consistent with the LWVP Strategic Plan and is supported by the linked Council service area that assists the partnership work and oversees the Landscape Initiatives grants budget.
- 3.8. The Council’s Community Revenue Grant criteria stipulate that only one grant can be allocated per project. In this case, the Council’s annual grant contributes to the core running costs of the LWVP. The additional funding request that is the subject of the current report is to assist the delivery of a specific and distinct project and is deemed acceptable on these terms.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 4.1. The current report sets out the funding recommendation that results from the Grant Panel’s assessment 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.
- 4.2. An alternative option would be to not accept the report’s recommendation and reject the application for funding.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended grant award in this report can be financed from the Council’s Community Revenue Grants budget.

#### **6. RISKS**

Any risks associated with the funded activity are considered as part of the funding application and evaluation process. The small cost and known scope of the proposed project mean that risk is limited.

## **7. REASONS**

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