

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND LEISURE

31 JULY 2019

COMMUNITY REVENUE GRANT

REPORT OF THE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES MANAGER

(CONTACT: HEATHER MCCULLOCH, TEL: (01993) 861562)

(The decision on this matter will be a resolution.)

1. PURPOSE

To consider a Community Revenue Grant award for 2019/20 under the authority given to the Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure by Cabinet on 20 April 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed Community Revenue Grant (2019/20) award of £1,648.00 to Witney Talking News 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 for 2019/20 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.

- 3.4. Witney Talking News was established in 1979 and provides news in audio format to blind and visually-impaired people throughout West Oxfordshire.
- 3.5. The service has 80 listeners who elect to receive the service every week. With the support of almost 60 volunteers the service operates from rooms hired at the High Street Methodist Church in Witney.
- 3.6. Witney Talking News is a member of the National and Oxfordshire Talking News Federations. This provides oversight for member organisations and avoids overlap and duplication of services.
- 3.7. The current application requests £2497.00 (50%) towards total project costs of £4994.00. 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.
- 3.8. The costs for the applicant are room hire, the purchase of 2 replacement duplicating machines and other consumables. The applicant currently has reserves of £5561 with annual expenditure in 2017/18 of £3956.
- 3.9. It is recommended that a lower level of funding be awarded as the project has limited coverage across the District. The level of funding recommended is £1.648.00 or 33% of the total project cost.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. An alternative option would be to not accept the report's recommendation and reject the application for funding.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. RISKS

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. The risk of recommending a lower level of funding is mitigated by the healthy level of reserves at the disposal of the applicant.

7. REASONS

- 7.1. 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