

Recommendation of the Grants to External Organisations Review Group

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| Report No: | CAB/WS/19/027 | |
| Report to and date: | Cabinet | 10 September 2019 |
| Cabinet Member: | Councillor Robert Everitt Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities Tel: 01284 769000 Email: robert.everitt@westsuffolk.gov.uk | |
| Lead officer: | Davina Howes Assistant Director (Families and Communities) Tel: 01284 757070 Email: davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk | |
| Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <u>do not</u> apply.) | Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition? Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

Decisions Plan: *The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.*

Wards impacted: All wards



Recommendation: **It is recommended that:**

- (1) A West Suffolk Grant Working Party be established to consider Community Chest grant applications for 2020/21 and make recommendations to Cabinet on the allocation of funding.**
- (2) The Grants to External Organisations Review Group, including all current Members, be constituted to form the West Suffolk Grant Working Party; and**
- (3) Progress of the Grants to External Organisations Review Group be noted.**



1. Background / Context

- 1.1 On 25 June 2019, Cabinet agreed to establish a group to carry out a review of West Suffolk Council's Grants to External Organisations. The aim of the review is to ensure that locality budgets, grants and reliefs made from 1 April 2020 are aligned to the Council's strategic objectives and offer value for money. The review covers grant and relief schemes which are entirely discretionary or funded by West Suffolk Council and where the Council is not under any duty to have a scheme or operate the scheme in a certain way. Therefore, the review covers the following existing schemes:

- Families and communities grants
- Leisure and culture grants
- Economic development grants
- Environment/sustainability grants
- Discretionary Rate Relief

2. Proposals

Recommendation for decision making on 2020/21 Community Chest grant allocations

- 2.1 On 27 November 2018, the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) considered report EXC/SA/18/015 that set out transitional arrangements for managing Locality Budgets in 2019/20 and applications for Community Chest for 2020/21.
- 2.2 It was agreed that a full review of the Community Chest grant scheme be undertaken in summer 2019, which is now being included as part of the Review of Grants to External Organisations. At the time of the report, it was noted that there was not sufficient time to carry out a full review of the approach to community grants before the 2020/21 round of Community Chest opened in July 2019. It was therefore proposed that the 2020/21 grants continue on the basis of the current schemes, and that consideration be given as to whether decisions be made by the Portfolio Holder or a West Suffolk Grants Working Party and West Suffolk Council Cabinet.
- 2.3 In line with this proposal, the Grants to External Organisations Review Group has considered how decisions should be made about Community Chest grant applications for 2020/21
- 2.4 The Grants to External Organisations Review Group recommends that, this year, a West Suffolk Grant Working Party be established to advise Cabinet on the 2020/21 round of Community Chest funding. Furthermore, it was also recommended that the West Suffolk Grant Working Party be constituted as the members of the Grants to External Organisations Review Group. The Group will need to meet in September and November with a view to making their recommendations to the November Cabinet meeting.
- 2.5 The proposed Grant Working Party would have the following Terms of Reference:



To consider grant applications and recommend the level of grants payable to organisations to officers or the Cabinet, based on the policies agreed by Council and in accordance with the criteria for Community Chest Grant funding.

- 2.6 In future meetings, the Grants to External Organisations Review Group will then assess the arrangements for supporting community organisations for 2021/22 onwards and for the other existing grant decisions which sit outside of Community Chest for 2020/21.

Review of Grants to External Organisations

- 2.7 The Review Group met on 20 August 2019 and began its consideration of how grants to external organisations should be managed in the future. The discussions were informed by a summary of the current position and other funding sources available to local organisations, as well as the feedback from two online consultations. First, a consultation with councillors on how the Locality Budget Scheme was working and second, the interim results of a survey of organisations and groups that have received and/or applied for grant funding to understand how the current arrangements work for them now, how they could be managed in the future and how they might be improved.
- 2.8 In future meetings, the Review Group will be considering what should be the role and purpose of West Suffolk's grants and how best they can be allocated and administered from 2020/21 onwards.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Without a Grant Working Party, an alternative mechanism would be needed to approve the Community Chest grant awards for 2020/21. This could take the form of a Portfolio Holder or officer-led process; or consideration by Cabinet. These options are not considered to be proportionate either in terms of the level of accountability involved, or the time needed to consider a large number of applications, respectively.

4. Consultation and engagement

- 4.1 The establishment of a Grants Working Party does not require consultation and engagement. In the longer term, any changes to the future arrangements will take account of the responses received to both surveys described in paragraph 2.7 above.

5. Risks

- 5.1 None apply

6. Implications arising from the proposal

- 6.1 Financial

At this stage, the 2020/21 funding allocations will be made within the budget allocation.



6.2 Equalities

The West Suffolk Community Chest has provided support to a wide range of organisations who support individuals with protected characteristics.

6.3 Changes to existing policy

The Grant Working Party will be considering applications using the current West Suffolk policies.

6.4 Impact on other organisations

Organisations wishing to apply for Community Chest funding will be able to attend meetings of the Grant Working Party to hear applications being considered.

7. **Appendices**

None

8. **Background documents**

- 8.1 Shadow Executive (Cabinet) report on 27 November 2018: [EXC/SA/18/015](#)
Cabinet report on 25 June 2019: [CAB/WS/19/007](#)

