

PAPER NO. 1

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF MONDAY 13TH JULY

Meeting: Executive

Date: 13 July 2015

Subject: New Homes Bonus Community Funding 2015/16

Report of: Tom Day, Community Partnerships Manager

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Page, Portfolio Holder for Communities

Status: For Decision

Relevant Ward(s): All Wards

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To consider the recommendations for the allocation of the £250,000 New Homes Bonus funding for communities in 2015/16.

2 Recommendations:

It is recommended;

2.1 To allocate £95,000 for Community Grants in 2015/16 and to delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities to finalise the details of the scheme.

2.2 To create a Locality Fund whereby Parishes will receive £100 for every new dwelling delivered between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015. Provisionally this is 480 dwellings equating to £48,000.

2.3 To create a capacity building fund of £5,000 to ensure maximum community benefit from New Homes Bonus community funding and to delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities to deploy this resource.

2.4 To hold the remaining funds in reserves pending a further report to Executive later in the year on how these funds can best support the delivery of community objectives.

3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 To continue to fund a district wide community grant scheme to support voluntary and community groups.
- 3.2 To ensure a proportion of New Homes Bonus funding goes directly to the parishes that have accepted development for them to spend on local priorities.
- 3.3 To ensure maximum value for money through ensuring appropriate support and advice is available to the Voluntary and Community Sector looking to apply for a community grant.

4 Key Facts

- 4.1 For a third year the Council has identified £250,000 from New Homes Bonus Reserve to support the delivery of corporate priorities. It is proposed that this funding is split into 2 funding streams
- 4.2 **A Community Grant Fund** of £95,000 (also known as the New Homes Bonus District Wide Fund). This will continue to be an inclusive fund, open to all parishes and voluntary and community groups, and be closely linked to Council priorities. To encourage communities from across the district to access this fund and to ensure value for money the scoring system will be refined. This will include;
 - a) Higher weighting to projects in geographic areas that have not previously received funding,
 - b) Funding only new or successful projects looking to expand in a different service or geographical area,
 - c) Higher weighting to projects that have match funding from other sources,
 - d) Higher weighting to projects that can demonstrate sustainability,
 - e) Allowing only 1 application per organisation per year,
 - f) Higher weighting to projects where no alternative local funding streams exist which could support the work.
 - g) A limit to core organisational costs and staffing costs.
- 4.3 **A Locality Fund.** This will be worth £100 per house completed in 2014/15 and be passported directly to parishes. The total amount to be passported will be governed by how many new dwellings have been occupied and identified on the Government return CTB1 between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 – provisionally 480 dwellings.
- 4.4 **Funding for capacity building.** A capacity building fund of £5,000 will be set up to support parishes and voluntary and community groups to ensure maximum benefit from New Homes Bonus Funding. For example to improve the quality of applications, identify match funding opportunities and increase the success rate of applications coming forward.

4.5 To ensure the New Homes Bonus Reserve is used effectively further work is being carried out to investigate other ways of utilising this funding to enable community led action. A proportion of funding could therefore be held back pending the outcome of this work.

5 Legal Issues

5.1 The £250K Community Grant Budget is funded from the New Homes Bonus Reserve. This is unringfenced money and it is down to the Council to decide how this is utilised.

6 Resource Issues

6.1 Resources to ensure effective and efficient delivery of funding streams will be met from existing budgets and through capacity building funding identified in this report.

7 Equality Analysis Implications/Outcomes

7.1 The application form and guidance notes are designed to be user friendly and have been agreed in consultation with the Councils Equalities Officer.

7.2 The process will be communicated widely to all who could potentially gain from these grants.

7.3 Applicants will be required to demonstrate that their projects are accessible to all and will not have a detrimental impact on any of the groups of protected characteristics

8. Risk Management Implications

8.1 Inflexible grant criteria could mean projects that meet a local need are excluded from applying.

8.2 Not including a scoring system for grants risks that funding will not support Corporate Objectives and be distributed in as equitable way as possible across the district.

9 Consultation

9.1 The development of grant streams to deliver NHB funding allocated to community projects was subject to consultation and research using a variety of sources. These include:

- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils
- Public Health
- Corporate Plan
- Harborough parishes
- Past grant applicants

- Portfolio Holder Cllr Rosita Page
- Corporate Management Team at HDC
- Review of feedback from Section 106 Grants Panel minutes

10. Options

10.1 To continue with last year's allocation criteria and split of funding, between a District Wide Grant and Locality Funding, would not maximise value for money or sufficiently encourage successful applications from a wider range of community and voluntary groups to support the delivery of Council priorities.

11. Background Papers

11.1 Previous NHB Grant allocations 2013 – 2015.

Previous report(s):

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N

Ward Members Notified: N

Appendices: None.