

# Harborough District Council



## Report to Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meeting of 13 June 2024

<b>Title:</b>	Criteria for Community Grants to Parish and Town Councils
<b>Status:</b>	Report – Public
<b>Key Decision:</b>	n/a
<b>Report Author:</b>	Cat Hartley, Director of Communities & Wellbeing Rachael Felts, Head of Community Partnerships
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Asher - Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Economy and Tourism
<b>Appendices:</b>	n/a

### Summary

- i. *At its meeting in February 2024, Council agreed to provide £1m in capital grant funding for parish and town councils.*
- 1.1. *The allocation of the grant will be split between towns, large villages, medium villages, villages close to urban settlements and small/smaller villages/hamlets.*

### Recommendations

- 1. To receive, consider and comment on the new £1m Parish and Town Council Capital Grant scheme criteria and the process for awarding the grants.

### Reasons for Recommendations

- ii. To provide Members of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel with the details on Parishes and Town Council Grant Scheme which will be considered by Cabinet in July 2024.

# 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.2. To enable Members of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to have an overview of the new £1m Capital Grant scheme for parishes and towns of the Harborough district before it is taken to Cabinet in July for approval.

# 2. Background

- 2.1. At its budget meeting in February 2024, Council agreed to provide a capital grant scheme of £1m for parish and town councils.
- 2.2. The new grant scheme will strengthen working relationships between the Council and its parishes and towns.
- 2.3. Through joint working with parishes and towns in the distribution of these grants it will enable delivery of projects and initiatives at a local level.
- 2.4. These grants will provide an opportunity for parish and town councils to support their communities in delivering community projects.
- 1.5 The Council has several grant/funding opportunities for businesses, organisations, and communities across the district to apply for funding these are:

Grant Name	Criteria	Funding available	Target Audience	Capital / Revenue	Spend date
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Pre-determined projects to support to delivery of the Gov Grant by 2025	£3.7m	Businesses and communities	Capital	March 2025
Councillor/Ward Grants	To be determined	£170k	To be determined	Capital	
Environment Grant	Grants ranging from £5K to £20k and must have a positive and provable impact on the environment	£450k	Constituted 'not for profit' village/ community groups, community enterprises, registered charities, and town/parish councils	Capital	March 2027
S106 community facilities and offsite recreations	Contributions secured through planning obligations are used to mitigate or compensate for the negative impacts of a development.	£4.8m	Parish and Town Councils, Community Groups etc – where housing development has taken place	Capital	various
Harborough Lotto	Sign-up as a good cause. Identify your grant to be raised – promote the Lotto to your audiences	Various – currently 74 good causes	Community Groups, not for-profit organisations, Parish and Town Councils	Capital and Revenue	Various

## 3. Details

### 3.1 Proposed Criteria:

- Applications only to be accepted from Parish/Town Councils and Parish Meetings. In the case of Market Harborough, the ten Ward Councillors will consider applications and make recommendations through the Market Harborough Special Expenses Working Party before consideration at Cabinet Grants Sub-Committee.
- Applicants must hold a bank account in the name of the organisation and have at least three years of accounts.
- Community Groups can apply for funding through their Parish/Town Council or in the case of Market Harborough through the Market Harborough Special Expenses Working Party.
- Grant applications can be used to support other grant opportunities such as S106 'top-up'.
- More than one application can be submitted from each Parish or Town Council subject to it not exceeding the allocated grant amount for that Parish or Town.
- Grants must be spent within one year of receipt (unless agreement is given by HDC). Any non-spent money must be returned to the council.
- Applicants will need to demonstrate in no more than 500 words how their project meets/aligns to at least one the Council's Priorities:
  - Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place.
  - Promoting health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices.
  - Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations.
  - Supporting businesses and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy.

3.2 A share of the £1m grant will be allocated to parishes and town councils. The allocation of grant expenditure is still to be determined.

3.3 **Grant Process** - The new Grant Administrators will be able to offer help and support in the completion of applications where there may be little knowledge or experience. The Grant Administrators will be responsible for administering the grant and ensuring all received applications are fully completed, meet the criteria and accompanying documents are provided.

3.4 A 'grants-window' will be opened for applications for a set period (e.g. two months). When the 'window' closes applications will be prepared into a report form and will be presented to Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants for decision. Once the Cabinet Sub-Committee has met, a new 'window' will be opened for new applications. Officers will align closing dates and meeting dates to enable an efficient process.

3.5 If the allocation is not spent after several grant rounds, any non-spent money may be combined to create a further grant opportunity. This will be considered by the Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants in due course.

## 4. Implications of Decisions

### Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This grant scheme will meet all four of the council's corporate priorities, these being:
- Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place.
  - Promoting health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices.

- Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations.
- Supporting businesses and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy.

## **Consultation**

4.1 Consultation is not required in the preparation of this report, once agreed, the grant opportunity will be shared widely with parishes and town councils.

## **Financial**

4.2 At its meeting in February 2024, Council approved the £1m capital grant fund.

4.3 At the same meeting, Members also agreed £92,202 in 2024/25 and £95,429 in 2025/26 for grant administrator posts to support this grant and the Members grant fund.

## **Legal**

4.4 Each grant award made shall be governed by a Grant Agreement between the parties and shall contain the Proposed Criteria conditions listed at paragraph 3.1. Compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the Act) shall be determined upon each grant award, and the Council shall consider whether the financial assistance is considered a subsidy, and therefore whether the requirements of the Act apply.

## **Environmental Implications**

4.5 There are no environmental implications relating to this report.

## **Risk Management**

4.6 Management of the grant process will be through the Council's Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants which terms of reference enable this committee to approve grants.

## **Equalities Impact**

4.7 There are no equalities impact relating to this report.

## **Data Protection**

4.8 All data collected as part of the grant application process will be handled in line with the Council's Data Sharing Policy, the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

## **5. Alternative Options Considered**

5.1 No other alternatives were considered as the grant will be available to towns and parish as agreed by Council in February 2024 and will align to the Council's priorities.

5.2 The grants approval process is already in place in the form of the Cabinet Sub-Committee Grants.

## **6. Recommendation**

3. To receive, consider and comment on the new £1m Parish and Town Council Capital Grant scheme criteria and the process for awarding the grants.

## **7. Background papers**

- 7.1 Council – February 2024