

CNEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4th December 2024

Report of the Director of Finance

H. Jones

Matter for: Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Third Sector Grant & Commissioning Arrangements

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members approval of the arrangements for the next round of 3rd Sector Grant funding, which will commence April 1st 2025.
2. To seek Members approval of proposed additional criteria organisations will be required to demonstrate a contribution to in their applications for funding for the financial year 2025/2026.
3. To inform Members of the proposed review of the council's 3rd sector grant funding and commissioning arrangements.

Background

4. The council's Third Sector Grant Funding Scheme, was reviewed during 2021-2022 and has continued annually since.
5. At the meeting of Cabinet on 30th November 2022 and subsequently on 7th March 2023 approval was given to support six strategic partnerships for a 3 year period up to 2025/2026 (ending on 31st March 2026).
6. At the meeting of Cabinet on 23rd December 2023 and subsequently on 14th February 2024, approval was given to support eight organisations for a 1 year period up to 2024/2025 (ending on 31st March 2025).

Third Sector Grant & Commissioning Arrangements – Proposed Review

7. To ensure the most efficient use of the council's financial resources, which are aligned to the council's priorities and deliver the best outcomes for our residents it is proposed to initiate an independent review of the council's third sector grant and commissioning arrangements.
8. A scoping document for the review will be drafted with work commencing on the review from April 2025.
9. Recommendations from the review will be implemented from 1st April 2026.

Third Sector Grants Applications - 2025/2026

10. The current one year grant arrangements end on 31st March 2025 and the strategic partner three year grant arrangements end on 31st March 2026.
11. To enable the outcomes of the above review to be implemented from 1st April 2026, it is proposed to run a one year 3rd sector grant scheme for the financial year 2025/2026.
12. This will bring to a close both grant schemes (one year and three year) at the same time – 31st March 2026 and will enable the recommendations from the above review to be implemented from 1st April 2026.
13. The council's current 3rd Sector Grant Scheme clearly states the council wishes to adopt an outcomes-based approach to the way in which it determines its grant funding arrangements and that applications which demonstrate the following will be particularly welcome:
 - Contribution to the delivery of key policies and priorities as agreed within the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027.
 - Reducing the demand on council services.
 - Levering in of additional resources. Applications that demonstrate how council funding will be used to lever in additional resources in support of council priorities are particularly welcomed.
 - Financial sustainability. The council will wish to be satisfied that the applicant is not dependent on continuing council funding to achieve financial sustainability.

14. In addition to the above criteria, it will be vitally important for proposed applications to also demonstrate how the activities outlined in their applications will contribute significantly to any of the following key focus areas. where the council is currently experiencing increasing demand and cost:
- Tackling Child Poverty
 - Mental Health
 - Vulnerable Adults
15. To ensure the most efficient use of the council's financial resources and the alignment with the council's priorities, a revised application form and evaluation process has been developed and are attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively. The evaluation process will be shared with those organisations wishing to apply at the start of the application process.

Third Sector Grants Application Timetable

16. The grant application process will be open for applications from the 9th December to 24th January 2025. Officers will review and evaluate the applications received and a report setting out the recommended approved applications will be presented to Cabinet on 19th March 2025.

Financial Appraisal

17. The indicative amount of funding available to support the third sector grant scheme in 2025/26 is £586,000. c£347,000 of this amount has already been committed to support the existing strategic partnership arrangements. This means that the amount of funding available to support new one year applications for 2025/26 is c£239,000.

Integrated Impact Assessment

18. This report does not propose any major changes to the current Scheme rather it seeks to clarify the criteria for applications for the next round of one year third sector grant funding commencing 2025.

Valleys Communities Impact

19. The Scheme is open to all eligible organisations across the county borough, including those that operate in valleys communities.

Workforce Impact

20. There is no workforce impact.

Legal Impact

21. All successful grant recipients will be required to sign a Grant Agreement.

Risk Management

22. Without clarifying the criteria where applications are welcomed, there is a risk that the council will receive applications for funding that are not aligned with its priorities, leading to frustration on the part of applicants and unnecessarily consuming officer and member time.

Consultation

23. As there are no fundamental changes to the Scheme there is no requirement for external consultation on this report.

Recommendations

24. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - i. Approve the proposed arrangements for 3rd Sector Grant funding for the financial year 2025/2026.
 - ii. Approve the proposed additional criteria organisations will be required to demonstrate a contribution to in their applications for funding for the financial year 2025/2026.

- iii. Note the proposal for an independent review of the council's third sector grant and commissioning arrangements.

Reason for Proposed Decision

25. To ensure funding decisions made for the 2025/26 financial year in relation to grants awarded under the Third Sector Grants Scheme are aligned with the council's overall priorities.

Implementation of Decision

26. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

27. Appendix 1 – Application Form
Appendix 2 – Evaluation Process

List of Background Papers

Neath Port Talbot Third Sector Grant Funding Scheme

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