

CABINET

JULY 2020

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER

K.JONES

Matter for Decision

Wards affected: All

Title of Report: Third Sector Scheme – funding priorities 2021-22 and beyond

Purpose of Report

To provide those organisations eligible to apply for funding under the terms of the Third Sector Grants Scheme with clarity as to the criteria that the Council will apply in assessing bids for funding in 2021-22.

Background

The Council co-produced the Third Sector Grant Funding Scheme (attached for reference) currently in operation.

Basically, the Scheme seeks to align funding decisions with the overall priorities of the Council.

In previous years, the Council's Corporate Plan has been the main reference document for applicants to refer to when submitting applications for funding. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has seen the Council temporarily shift its medium-long term focus to more immediate matters that require attention as part of the Council's emergency response. Consequently, there is no revised Corporate Plan published for 2020-21.

Consideration therefore needs to be given as to the basis on which the Council would wish to invite applications for funding in line with the Scheme for the next financial year (2021-22).

Proposal

The Council's well-being objectives remain relevant in the short, medium and long term. However, the priorities that the Council is focusing upon during this planning period are set out in the "Moving Forward" document approved by the Cabinet on 30th July. Furthermore, the Panel established by the Council to advise the Cabinet on recovery planning has identified the need to sustain community action as a key area of focus, building on the tremendous community action we have seen across all communities in the county borough - action the Panel feels should be encouraged and further developed.

It is therefore suggested that:

- All new bids for 12 months funding or less be specifically focused on activities that will help to further develop community capacity, building from the community action that has supported the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and/or supporting the Council in meeting humanitarian needs should there be further restrictions imposed by governments to deal with a rise in infection rates.
- Those organisations in receipt of multi-year grant agreements be asked to set out in clear terms how they intend to adjust their activities to support the further development of community capacity building and/or to support the Council in meeting humanitarian needs in the event of further restrictions being imposed by governments to deal with a rise in infection rates.

It is further suggested that a fundamental review of the Scheme is undertaken in early 2021-22 to ensure the Scheme remains relevant in subsequent financial years.

Financial Impacts

There are no additional financial impacts that flow from this report. The report seeks to ensure value for money decisions are taken aligned with the Council's short term priorities given the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Integrated Impact Assessment

This report does not propose any changes to the current Scheme rather it seeks to clarify the short term priorities being pursued by the Council in the absence of a revised corporate plan.

Valleys Communities Impact

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

Workforce Impacts

None

Legal Impacts

None

Risk Management Impacts

Without clarifying the Council's priorities in the short term, 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.

There is also a risk that the Council will lose an opportunity to encourage community action across the county borough and to strengthen community capacity for the longer term.

Consultation

As there are no changes being proposed to the Scheme itself there is no requirement for external consultation on this report. However, the Director of the Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Action has been advised of the

recommendations contained in this report and a positive response was received.

Recommended

1. That Cabinet approves the following as the criteria for inviting bids for funds governed by the Third Sector Grants Scheme in 2021-22:
 - All new bids for 12 months funding or less be specifically focused on activities that will help to further develop community capacity, building from the community action that has supported the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and/or supporting the Council in meeting humanitarian needs should there be further restrictions imposed by governments to deal with a rise in infection rates.
 - Those organisations in receipt of multi-year grant agreements be asked to set out in clear terms how they intend to adjust their activities to support the further development of community capacity building and/or to support the Council in meeting humanitarian needs in the event of further restrictions being imposed by governments to deal with a rise in infection rates.

2. That the Cabinet approves the proposal to undertake a more fundamental review of the Scheme in early 2021-22.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To ensure funding decisions made for the 2021-22 financial year in relation to grants awarded under the Third Sector Grants Scheme are aligned with the Council's overall priorities and reflect the specific circumstances of the Covid-19 emergency response situation.

To ensure that there is an opportunity in early 2021-22 to revise the Scheme to reflect the situation at that time, ensuring that the Scheme remains relevant in supporting the Council's priorities.

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