

## **Community Council Grants 2023-2024**

### **Report by Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships**

#### **Report for Decision**

##### **1 Recommendations**

Council is recommended to approve the allocation of £6,610 for Community Council Grants detailed in Appendix C.

##### **2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary**

The grants scheme for Community Councils is available on an annual basis. Funding of up to £300 is available each year to support administration and general running costs as well as additional funding to deliver new projects which benefit their local community. £10,000 is available for period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

This report asks Council to approve the recommendations of the scoring panel for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

**Date 18 April 2023**

**Report Contact: Karen McGowan 07990 136821**  
[karen.mcgowan@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:karen.mcgowan@midlothian.gov.uk)

### **3 Background/Main Body of Report**

- 3.1.1** Community Councils are set up by statute by the Local Authority and run by local residents to act on behalf of its area and residents.
- 3.1.2** The Midlothian Scheme for Community Councils states that the Council will provide an annual administrative grant to cover operating costs and publicity and any additional support services or resourcing required. Community Councils are also eligible to apply for any other grants Midlothian Council provides.
- 3.1.3** In June 2021, Council approved grant funding of £30,000 for Community Councils to cover the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. This equates to £10,000 per annum. All 15 Community Councils and the Federation of Community Councils are eligible to apply for up to £300 annually as a contribution towards general running costs. They can also apply for additional funding to support new or existing projects which benefit their community.
- 3.1.4** 13 Community Councils applied for a total of £8,210 from the budget of £10,000 for period 2023/24. It is recommended that £6,610 is approved, supporting 13 Community Councils.
- 3.2.1** Clear guidance was issued with the application forms detailing the information required under each section (Appendix D). Offers of advice and support were made to anyone considering making an application from Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE) staff.
- 3.2.2** A core group of council officers from CLLE facilitated and recorded the sessions but did not score applications. The scoring panel was convened including Council officers, members of the Third Sector Interface (TSI) and volunteer community members.
- 3.2.3** Panel members were asked to declare any vested interest or potential conflict of interest in advance of the panels. Those who declared this were asked to leave whilst the application was scored.
- 3.3.1** All assessments followed clear scoring criteria and were scored out of 35.
- 3.3.2** Unsuccessful applicants or those receiving less than requested can ask for detailed feedback on their application on request.

## **4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital, Risk and Equalities)**

### **4.1 Resource**

The applications made and recommended awards for community council grants are included in Appendix 1 of this report.

### **4.2 Digital**

A web based form was used to ensure that it was simple to complete online and support was provided.

### **4.3 Risk**

The existing grants programme has been risk assessed and these risks are included in the Council's Risk Register. The programme is subject to internal audit that helps reduce the risks associated with managing the programme. The processes associated with awarding grants includes robust risk assessment procedures to ensure compliance with Following the Public Pound guidance.

Grants are normally paid in advance on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. An end of year report including evidence of financial spend/audited accounts is required at the end of the grant period. Further grant offers will not be considered or paid until this information is received.

### **4.4 Ensuring Equalities**

The integrated impact assessment concluded that the grant programme will have a positive impact on equality groups across Midlothian.

### **4.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)**

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A - Additional Report Implications**

**Appendix B – Recommended list of awards for Community Councils**

**Appendix C – Sample application form**

## APPENDIX A – Additional Report Implications

### A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The statutory purposes of community councils are set out in Section 51 (2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and included in the Midlothian Scheme for Community Councils. Community Councils contribute both to local democracy and to meeting the 4 key outcomes within the Single Midlothian Plan.

### A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

### A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious

### A.4 Delivering Best Value

Scoring all applications against key criteria has ensured that Best Value is a key part of the assessment process. One of the questions assessed focused on whether the project was good value for money and demonstrated realistic costs.

### A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The application forms and criteria were co-produced with the voluntary sector and designed based on feedback from previous and potential applicants about the process and information available. Stakeholders were involved in scoring panel to assess applications.

## **A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

By supporting Community Councils the grants will have a positive impact on the performance and outcomes of the Council and the Community Planning Partnership and encourage local participation.

## **A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

Community Councils represent the local community to the local authority and have an important role to play in local democracy. They facilitate a wide range of activities which promote the well-being of their communities and bring people together to make things happen, and advise, petition, influence and advocate numerous causes and concerns on behalf of local communities.

## **A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

Supporting Community Councils will ensure that they play a key role in supporting sustainable development.