

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR LOCALITIES AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING****DATE:** 18 APRIL 2017**LEAD OFFICER:** RACHEL CROSSLEY, NEW MODELS OF DELIVERY LEAD**SUBJECT:** COMMUNITY BUILDINGS GRANT SCHEME**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To make decisions to approve or reject applications to the Community Building Grants Scheme (CBGS) for the year 2017-18.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Localities and Community Wellbeing:

1. reviews all of the applications highlighting the ones that have been approved and the value of grants awarded up to a total value of £150,000;
2. produces a supplementary list of provisional grant awards up to the value of £23,761.82 which will be subject to further separate approval of additional funding;
3. highlights any unsuccessful applications with clear reasons why they have not been successful; and
4. gives direction to the Community Building Advisor on the next steps where a clear decision has not been reached.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a tripartite grant scheme and grants are awarded for refurbishment and renovation of community buildings to widen access for community use. Any grant Surrey County Council awards requires match funding from the Borough or District Council in which the community building is located and from the applicant organisation themselves. The scheme is administered and managed on behalf of the County Council and Borough and District Councils by Surrey Community Action.

The Council has allocated £150,000 to the Community Building Grant Scheme for 2017/18. Separate approval will be sought to use the underspend from 2016/17 to increase this by £23,761.82

The scheme generates in excess of £500,000 of capital funding to renovate community build which sit at the heart of vibrant and active communities. By providing this funding there are huge benefits for the residents of Surrey in terms of community cohesion, addressing social isolation and improving the health and wellbeing of the communities.

Community Buildings Grant Scheme

1. The Community Building Grants Scheme has been supported by the County Council since 1998 and offers capital grants to village halls, community centres and voluntary youth buildings. Grants can be for any general refurbishment that will improve usage and accessibility to the building such as:
 - New buildings/extensions
 - Disability access and facilities
 - Major structural work to amenities or refurbishment
 - Car parking maintenance, fencing etc

2. Community buildings sit at the heart of successful communities. By investing in them the County Council drives significant benefits for the residents of Surrey. A wide range of activities are hosted through community buildings, such as training, childcare, social programmes for older people, supporting and reaching the most vulnerable in our communities. This links in to key strategic priority areas for the Council to drive wellbeing, economic prosperity and ensure the outcomes for Surrey residents are improved.

3. The County Council has committed £150,000 to the scheme for 2017/18.

4. The scheme is a partnership between the County Council, the Borough and District Councils and applicant organisations. Any grant the County Council awards requires match funding from the Borough or District council in which the community building resides. All of the Borough and District Councils apart from Epsom & Ewell and Waverley Borough Council are part of the Scheme.

5. Community groups apply for assistance but must contribute at least a third of total project costs themselves. The organisation of the whole scheme is contracted by the County Council and Borough and District Councils to Surrey Community Action who deal with the application process, assess the schemes through site visits and background work and make recommendations to the councils.

6. It is an essential requirement of the scheme that the community halls are actively managed and marketed for the use by the wider community. The Community Buildings Advisor assesses current use and anticipated increase of use once the refurbishment has been carried out and scores against the criteria.

Community Buildings Grant Scheme (CBGS) 2017-18

7. The application round for the 2017-18 scheme opened in April 2016 and closed in August 2016. **Annex A** has a breakdown of all the applications. There were twenty one applications for consideration this year which came from seven of the Borough and District areas, of these only sixteen were seen as suitable to go through for potential approval. After the applications were submitted, the Community Buildings Advisor liaised with the Borough and District Councils to carry out site visits, understand any localised issues and carry out the due diligence related to the application qualifying process, eg: is the building available for wider community use, checking their accounts and systems etc.

8. The CBGS is broadly promoted through press releases via newspapers, radio stations and on-line bulletins across the whole county. In addition to this, all community buildings and religious buildings on the CBGS database, Guildford and Southwark and wider interfaith databases were sent letters informing them of the funding round and opportunity. Adverts were also placed through national sites such as NCVO and Grantfinder.

9. In total there were 1,615 general enquiries (including issues on Governance, Charity Law, health and safety, employment issues, Trustees responsibility, Insurance) to the Community Buildings Advisory Service. Of these enquiries 358 required further work and in depth support. The table below shows which borough or district the enquiries came from:

Elmbridge	33
Epsom & Ewell	4 (not part of the scheme)
Guildford	24
Mole Valley	42
Reigate & Banstead	28
Runnymede	28
Spelthorne	0 (not part of the scheme for this year – has joined for next year)
Surrey Heath	33
Tandridge	66
Waverley	32 (not part of the scheme but pay for advice service)
Woking	63
Surrey Wide	0
OUT OF AREA	5
TOTAL:	358

10. In 2016/2017 of the 15 projects that applied, all of them were helped to access other funds with over 1,000 applications being made to other grant funders and fundraising strategies being advised on. Please see Annex B for a case study on one of the projects relating to the 2016/17
11. Following a thorough review the application and management process was updated, including the introduction of a more fit for purpose, transparent scoring criteria.
12. The Cabinet Member for Localities and Community Wellbeing wrote to Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council inviting them to join the Scheme. Spelthorne Borough Council agreed to join the Scheme for 2017/18.

CONSULTATION:

13. Prior to the Cabinet Member's decision making meeting, local Divisional Members have been consulted by both the applicant organisation and the Community Buildings Advisor. Their support for the application is critical in enabling the Cabinet Member to make an informed decision, based on local knowledge.
14. Officers from the relevant Borough and District Councils have also been extensively engaged in the application process prior to this decision making meeting to check the viability of the proposal and to gain the Borough or District support. This again enables the Cabinet Member to have some confidence in both the credibility and suitability of the application.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

15. There is a risk that the funds may not be used in the ways that have been specified or that the management board of the community building disbands before the project has been completed. To counter this, payment is only made once the work has been completed and inspected by the both the Borough/District Council officer and the Community Buildings Advisor. Also, during the application process scrutiny is given to ensure there are robust governance arrangements and policies and procedures in place that depict a well-managed community building, such as audited accounts, secondary contacts, regular site visits and financial safeguarding procedures are followed.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

16. The £150,000 the County Council puts into the scheme is match funded by the relevant Borough and District Councils to provide total grant funding of £300,000. Along with the applicant organisations' funding this generates a much greater amount annually for investment in to community buildings in Surrey. On average, the scheme generates an annual investment in excess of £500,000
17. Surrey Community Action are paid a fee by Surrey County Council (SCC) of £16,000 to administer the scheme and deliver the Community Building Advice service as part of their core funding grant. The service also provided an extensive training programme from funding through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Awards for All funding. This would not be possible if the Scheme was not running and the Community Building Advisor not in place. In 2016/17 training was provided to 1,371 trustees and volunteers covering 320 buildings across Surrey.
18. The confirmed SCC funding for 2017/18 is £150,000.
19. In 2016/17 there was a scheme underspend of £23,761.82 due to one applicant withdrawal post approval and some projects spending less than projected. A separate request will be made to carry forward this underspend to increase the available grant funding. This gives a potential total funding of £173,761.82 subject to approval.
20. Annex A shows a summary breakdown of the applications. The anticipated wider capital funding generated within Surrey will be in excess of £4.5 million.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

21. The Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) confirms that all material, financial and business issues and risks have been considered/addressed
22. There is an approved capital budget for 2017/18 of £150,000.
23. The service intend to request a carry forward of the 2016/17 underspend in order to increase the value of grants awarded. This request requires separate Cabinet approval as part of 2016/17 outturn reporting. Whilst the intention is for the cabinet member to notionally allocate this additional funding, this must be on a provisional basis subject to funding approval. No grant offers from this additional funding can be confirmed to applicants prior to cabinet approval of the additional funding.
24. Once grants are approved the funding will be transferred to Surrey Community Action to administer.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

25. The general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 enables the Council to make these grants as it empowers local authorities to do anything an individual may generally do. Given the Council's fiduciary duty, it is noted that processes are in place to ensure the appropriate governance of the projects and to ensure that the grants are only made once the work is properly completed.

Equalities and Diversity

26. Investment in the community buildings has a positive impact across all protected groups encouraging them to participate in community life where possible and often reach the most vulnerable in our society. Grants are only successful for those organisations that demonstrate they serve the wider community and exclude no group or individual.

Other Implications:

27. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	Set out below
Community Resilience	Set out below
Climate change	No significant implications arising from this report
Carbon emissions	No significant implications arising from this report

28. As discussed in paragraph 6 above, by investing in community buildings there is a strong understanding the general well-being of the residents of Surrey is enhanced. The whole scheme is based on the premise that a thriving community building sits at the heart of a vibrant, successful community, offering valuable support and opportunities often to the most vulnerable in society, enhancing their health and wellbeing and building capacity and community resilience.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- The Community Buildings Advisor will notify successful applicants of the award where the final approval has been made at the county and local level.
- A request will be made to carry forward the underspend from 2016/17. This will be subject to an internal review process, with final requests presented to cabinet on 25 April for approval. The Community Buildings Advisor will notify unsuccessful applicants where appropriate.
- The Community Buildings Advisor will follow through necessary steps as directed by the Cabinet Member where a decision is reliant on further actions being completed.
- The Community Buildings Advisor will write to all Division Members to inform them of the outcome of the Cabinet Member Decision meeting.

Contact Officer:

Saba Hussain, Policy and Strategic Partnerships Manager – 0208 541 9876

Consulted:

Relevant Division Members

Annexes:

Annex A – details of the applications to 2017-18 CBGS

Annex B – Case Study of 2016-17 project

Sources/background papers:

N/A.

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