

Grants Board
19 October 2016

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the GRANTS BOARD held on Wednesday 19 October 2016 at 6.30pm at Campus East, Welwyn Garden City.

PRESENT: Councillors D.Bennett (Chairman)

H.Bower, L.Chesterman, I.Dean, J.Fitzpatrick

OFFICIALS Financial and Technical Accounting Officer (G.Fairhall)

PRESENT: Financial Accountant (T.Fortune)
Governance Services Officer (M.Lowe)

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

Councillor Chesterman declared a non-pecuniary interest in items on the Agenda as appropriate by virtue of being a Member of Hertfordshire County Council.

Councillor Fitzpatrick declared that he no longer had a non-pecuniary interest with regard to Resolve due to having ceased to be an employee in the summer of 2016.

10. COMMUNITY GRANTS 2016

The report of the Executive Director set out eight applications from voluntary groups which had been received for Annual Community Grants.

Members were asked to decide how the provisional grants budget of £198,270 would be allocated between the Annual Grants and Small Community Grants for 2017/18.

Members were asked to note that there was a proposed growth item in the budget for 2017/18 for an additional £4,000 to fund Small Community Grants to bring the total Small Community Grants budget to £24,000 of the total allocation.

Members noted that as part of the budget setting work for 2017/18 there had also been a proposal that £75,000 be ring fenced as a Grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau, which was subject to formal approval by Cabinet and the Council in January and February 2017 respectively.

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Members also noted that should there be any changes to the 2017/18 budgets for Community Grants, the Grants Board would review the decisions taken on the awards at its meeting in March 2017.

Therefore there was a remaining budget of £99,270 for Annual Community Grants.

10.1. Age UK Hertfordshire - Douglas Tilbe House

An application had been received for £47,008 (in addition to other income generated from client fees, fundraising and room hire) to be used to support salary costs; staff non-salary costs and other (non-staff) costs.

During the discussion of the application Members expressed concern regarding the cost per head of the services provided when compared to that of other similar organisations. The other organisations also assisted users to remain living independently in their own homes and provided respite for family carers.

The view was expressed by Members that care of the elderly and infirm was the responsibility of the County Council, however due to funding cuts made by the County Council this Authority should continue to support this sector of the community.

Members were of the view that further information be obtained regarding other comparators of similar provisions, such as the number of days the other clubs were open and the amount the members were charged when they did attend.

It was AGREED to pay a grant of £20,000.

10.2. Citizens Advice Welwyn Hatfield

An application had been received for £162,689 to pay towards the core running costs and towards operating the Core Advice Service. In addition, the funding would be used to pay for the direct costs of providing the Core Advice Service.

It was AGREED to pay a grant of £75,000.

10.3. Hatfield and District Age Concern (Friendship House)

An application for £14,000 had been received for funding towards the Centre's operating and maintenance costs including salaries, provisions utilities, refuse collection, repairs and maintenance, audits, inspections and insurance.

Members considered that the service provided by this facility was excellent value for money.

It was AGREED to pay a grant of £11,000.

10.4. Mind in Mid Herts

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An application had been received for £26,632 to fund the salary costs of the part-time Project Manager, part-time Mental Health Out-Reach Worker and part-time Volunteer Co-ordinator and the training and travel costs associated with the project.

Members voiced their continued support of this programme which was designed to improve the wellbeing and mental health of individuals living in the area and considered that due to the current funding policies of the NHS and County Council there was a distinct lack of complex needs support in the Borough.

It was AGREED to pay a grant of £22,000.

10.5. Resolve

An application had been received for £15,000 (£7,800 for Hatfield and £7,200 for Welwyn Garden City) to support the increasing work Resolve was involved in delivering.

The view was expressed by Members that funding should be used in Hatfield to support the ongoing street drinking problem in the town, a widely raised issue.

It was AGREED to pay a grant of £4,500 with the funding being used towards the project in Hatfield.

10.6. Saint John of God Hospitaller Services

An application had been received for £25,566 to cover the running costs of Digswell Horticultural Centre for adults with learning disabilities in 2017, specifically water rates (£3,600), gas (£14,000) and electric (£4,027), insurance (£1,909), telephone (£1,380) and broadband (£650).

Members commented that the grant should not be used to pay for utilities, but felt however that the programme should receive some support from this Council.

It was AGREED to pay a grant of £6,000.

10.7. Welwyn Hatfield Community and Voluntary Service

An application had been received for £13,945 to support two projects; £1,800 towards maintenance of the Car Scheme vehicle and £12,145 towards the operation of the Volunteer Centre including a paid part-time Co-ordinator at £9,145 p.a., travel expenses, training and DBS checks.

It was AGREED to pay a grant of £4,700 with £1,800 to be ring fenced towards the maintenance of the Car Scheme and the other £2,900 towards training and DBS costs.

10.8. Welwyn Hatfield Women's Refuge and Support Services

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An application had been received for £34,000 to cover the salary costs of the Outreach and Resettlement Service, the proportion of the Child Support Service salary costs not covered by the grant from Hertfordshire County Council Children's Services and the remainder of other salary costs not covered by other funding (e.g. the income from accommodation charges and Housing Related Support grant from Accommodation Solutions).

Members expressed very strong views regarding the lack of funding the Refuge received from Hertfordshire County Council as they were of the opinion that this was a County function and as such should be wholly funded by County. County had a legal duty of care to coordinate and fund Children Services on a Countywide basis. The women and children who used the facility were not necessarily from the Welwyn Hatfield area but from across Hertfordshire and the United Kingdom.

The Chairman undertook to organise meetings with other Chairmen of Grants Boards in the region to discuss Women's Refuges and how they funded them.

It was noted by Members that very few local authorities in Hertfordshire now supported a women's refuge and were strongly of the view that the refuge in Welwyn Hatfield should be retained as they knew how important this service was to women and children in danger.

It was AGREED to pay a grant of £31,070.

RESOLVED:

That the following Annual Grants be recommended to Cabinet:-

Organisation	Amount Sought	Amount Granted
Age UK Douglas Tilbe	£47,008	£20,000
Hatfield and District Age Concern	£14,000	£11,000
Mind in Mid Herts	£26,632	£22,000
Resolve	£15,000	£4,500
Saint John of God Hospitaller Services	£25,566	£6,000
Welwyn Hatfield Community and Voluntary Service	£13,945	£4,700
Women's Refuge	£34,000	£31,070
Community Grants Total Amount		£99,270.00
CAB		£75,000

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Small Grant Budget 17/18		£24,000
Annual and Small Community Grants Budget 17/18		£198,270

Meeting ended 8.20pm
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