

Agenda Item

Part I

Main author: Joyce Guthrie Executive

Member: Cllr Jane Quinton

All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
GRANTS BOARD – 20 FEBRUARY 2025
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (PLACE)

2025/26 ANNUAL COMMUNITY GRANTS

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The annual grants for 2025/26 opened on 6th January 2025 and closed on 31st January 2025. Thirty-four applications have been received for consideration for Annual Grants for financial year 2025/26.
- 1.2 The budget of £73,000 for the annual grants payments for the financial year 2025/26 was approved at Full Council on 3rd February 2025.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Members of the Grants Board are asked to consider the Annual Community Grant applications (as referred to in the Part II report) and the scoring of applications (appendix B) and make a recommendation to Cabinet in accordance with the agreed assessment criteria.
- 2.2 To ensure that the fund is available widely, the maximum amount that will be supported through this fund will be £15,000 per organisation.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 There are thirty-four applications totalling £361,979.50 for Annual Grants 2025/26 to be reviewed. That is £288,979.50 over the total amount of funds available.

Annual Community grants 25-26 organisations	Amount seeking	Minimum project funding required:
4th Welwyn Garden City Brownie Unit	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
A Slice of Happiness - Innate Health CIC	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
Communities 1st	£12,677.00	£10,000.00
CultureWood CIC Ltd	£5,000.00	£3,500.00
Digswell Place Group Riding for the Disabled Association	£9,880.00	£9,880.00
Down the Woods C.I.C	£8,590.00	£7,940.00
First Garden Cities Homes	£4,870.00	£4,870.00
Forever Young People	£12,168.00	£8,376.00
Future Living Hertford	£15,000.00	£8,550.00
Hatfield Food Bank	£10,000.00	£5,000.00
Health & Independent Living Support (HILS)	£15,000.00	£12,000.00

Herts Disability Sports Foundation	£10,550.00	£10,550.00
Home-Start Hertfordshire	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
Isabel Hospice	£6,142.00	£6,142.00
Ludwick Family Centre	£15,000.00	£10,000.00
Medialis Wellbeing CIC	£14,662.50	£14,662.50
North Mymms Youth Project	£1,696.00	£1,696.00
Northaw Transition CIC	£1,450.00	£1,200.00
Open Heavens Christian Centre Hatfield	£15,000.00	£14,121.00
Orchard Lawn Tennis Club 1/2	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
Orchard Lawn Tennis Club 2/2	£749.00	£374.00
Platypus Swimming Club for the Handicapped	£2,990.00	£1,495.00
Red Kite Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Service	£15,000.00	£5,000.00
Resolve	£14,370.00	£10,000.00
Sporting Aid	£8,200.00	£5,000.00
Sporting Inspirations CIC	£9,345.00	£9,345.00
The CareAbout Foundation	£15,000.00	£5,000.00
The Craft Room	£10,800.00	£10,800.00
The Reanella Trust	£14,400.00	£9,600.00
Things in Common Limited	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
Together for Welwyn Garden City	£7,500.00	£5,000.00
Welwyn Garden City Football and Social Club	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
Welwyn Hatfield Woman's Refuge	£15,000.00	£10,000.00
Wise About Food	£13,440.00	£13,440.00
Total:	£361,979.50	£291,041.50

- 3.2 Please see Part II report for the details regarding each of the Grant applications.
- 3.3 The budget approved for Annual Grants for the financial year 2025/26 is £73,000.
- 3.4 The total value of all thirty-four applications exceeds the budget available. Members are reminded that they are not able to award more than £73,000.
- 3.5 As part of the application process all applicants were asked to detail the minimum contribution required to deliver their projects. Projects have been scored based on the delivery of a project in full, if funding is considered at the minimum required level for an organisation, the scoring may also need to be considered (for example if a lower level of funding is awarded, could this significantly impact on the number of users/clients benefiting from the project and will this therefore impact the score).
- 3.6 In June 2024, the Grants Board considered and agreed the evaluation criteria for the annual grants process (appendix A), and also the introduction of a minimum required level of funding into application. This was introduced to ensure that the Board could adequately assess a reasonable level of funding if the scheme was again over-subscribed.
- 3.7 Members should be aware of the minimum required level when considering their recommendations to Cabinet, and where a grant award is recommended, the funding level should not be below this minimum level.
- 3.8 Of the thirty-four applications, fifteen projects require the full amount and cannot be delivered for less, the remaining nineteen have suggested that part delivery is possible
- 3.9 It should be noted that applications can only be considered by members of the

Grants Board if the organisation meets all the essential criteria. Some of those key criteria are list as follows:

- 3.9.1 Applications must come from an organisation that is incorporated or an unincorporated charity or a voluntary/community/not-for-profit group.
- 3.10 At least 50 per cent of the organisation's members/clients/users must live or work in the borough of Welwyn Hatfield. The organisation must be able to provide monitoring information on its membership/users.
- 3.11 The organisation must be committed to Equal Opportunities and have an Equalities Policy in place (where applicable). However, organisations may target some or all of its activities at specific groups, where the intention is to address discrimination or disadvantage.
- 3.12 The organisation must be sustainable and able to show budgetary information. They also must be able to provide recent audited/independently examined accounts or projected income/expenditure figures (in the case of organisations that are less than a year old) to demonstrate its need for financial assistance.
- 3.13 Detailed costs for the applicant must be provided within the application and it should be noted that within the criteria it is highlighted what can and what cannot be funded through the Annual Grant fund.
- 3.14 Each application has been scored using the agreed evaluation criteria (Appendix A) The maximum scoring available is 21.
- 3.15 Officers have scored the grant bids based on the agreed criteria, and a copy of the completed scoring matrix is provided in Appendix B. Any decisions to award grants must be made with regard to the agreed criteria. If members disagree with the scoring awarded against a bid, the Grants Board may debate and amend the scoring during the meeting based on their assessment of the submitted bids.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 A Service Level Agreement is entered into between the council and each successful grant applicant.
- 4.2 The discretionary award of grants must follow a clear evaluation criterion, as contained in appendix B. Members may debate and amend the scoring of applications, but should not move away from the criteria which was approved in advance of the launch of the scheme.
- 4.3 Risks of non-delivery may also be considered (for example if we are aware the deliverability of a scheme is reliant on third party approval, which has not already been obtained) as the Council must be reasonably confident that schemes can be delivered. Any amendments to scores should be documented in the minutes of the meeting to provide a clear record to the decisions being taken for the recommendations made to Cabinet.

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 The applications received total £361,979.50 which is more than the available budget of £73,000. Members of the Grant Board are asked to consider the scoring of applications as set out in appendix B and agree funding on the basis of the agreed

scheme criteria.

- 5.2 Members are not able to exceed the total budget available.
- 5.3 In the June 2024 Grants Board, the maximum award per project for this years scheme was set at £15k. It was also agreed to introduce a minimum level of required funding into the application process. Award values should not be recommended to Cabinet, which are lower than the minimum level of funding required.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 There is a risk related to providing grants to voluntary organisations in that there is the possibility that the organisation could go into administration and as such the funding would be lost. There is also the possibility that organisations do not spend the grant provided on the agreed projects or costs as per their applications.
- 6.2 The risks are mitigated as much as possible through the application process, where information is provided about the organisation, its governance and financial structures and the reason it has applied for funding. All successful grant applicants sign up a service level agreement with the council which sets out the terms of the grant and also what information is to be provided to monitor the outcomes. The information provided includes evidence on where the funding was spent.

Risk Score Likelihood Low; Impact Medium. Overall risk score Low.

7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 7.1 In complying with the Prevent duty Local Authorities need to ensure that publicly owned resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications. The funds will be issued as grant payments.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 9.1 There are no climate change implications

10 Human Resources Implication(s)

- 10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

- 11.1 Providing grants to community organisations for the benefit of Welwyn Hatfield residents assists the council in meeting its objectives to improve the health and wellbeing of the borough.

12 Communications Plan

- 12.1 All successful organisations are required to actively promote the Council when market their event or project.

12.2 The Council will also put out a press release detailing the successful applicants and highlighting some of the projects/initiatives that the Council is supporting through this round of Grants.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 The subject of this report is linked to several of the council's recently adopted priorities especially around a sense of community where people feel safe.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An EqlA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

14.2 Those organisations applying for a council grant are required to produce evidence of their commitment to equality and diversity.

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Date	6th February 2025

Evaluation Matrix

Scoring matrix		
Project beneficiaries	3	all residents
	2	limited
	1	closed group/small numbers
previous funding	3	new project
	2	previous small grant
	1	successive grants
cost per head	3	vfm
	2	medium cost
	1	high cost per head
	0	no information
additionality	3	new project
	2	old project /new participants
	1	BAU
	3	Combination
	2	venue costs
	1	50 -100% Staffing /capital only
Compliance	3	compliant
	2	Part compliant
	1	non compliant
Alignment to Council Priorities	3	4/5 Council priorities met
	2	2/3 priorities met
	1	1 priority met
		Total